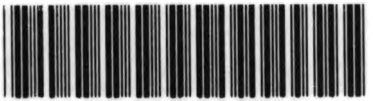
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FOOTSTEPS OF SPIRITS.

A COLLECTION OF

Upwards of Seventy well-authenticated Stories

OF

DREAMS, IMPRESSIONS, SOUNDS, AND APPEARANCES.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I.

DREAMS 11

CHAPTER II.

IMPRESSIONS 47

CHAPTER III.

SOUNDS 55

CHAPTER IV.

APPEARANCES :—

(1) General and Undefined—(2) Before Death—
(3) At, or about Death—(4) After Death . . . 63

CHAPTER V.

MISSION STORIES 111

CHAPTER VI.

MISCELLANEOUS 123

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As the Author has it in view to follow the "Footsteps of Spirits" into a Second Series, he will feel obliged to any of his readers who may chance to know of a well-authenticated case, if they will forward it to his publishers, with the particulars of its authentication, carefully enumerating the number and the kind of hands through which it may have come.

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INTRODUCTION.

THERE is a theory of Beauty which makes it depend entirely on association with circumstances of taste and of elegance,—which permits fashion to mould it, and habit to prescribe its laws. If this theory also holds good for Deformity, there surely never was an idea that owed its horror to association, like the idea represented by the word "Ghost." The word itself, as it is well known, is Saxon, and stands for the Latin "Spirit." The "Holy Ghost" means the same as the "Holy Spirit." "Ghostly" is sometimes used for "spiritual," though it is now nearly antiquated, and is rarely met with out of devotional books: so free from all that is alarming is the word "Ghost" in its religious sense. But the moment it is employed in a secular and common way, it strikes terror into the minds of weak persons; strange and horrible stories return to their memories, and it is well if serious injury is not done to the nerves of the sensitive and of the young. The word "Ghastly" now corresponds in meaning with this forbidding sense of "Ghost," and signifies what is horrible to witness, or even to imagine.

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Yet, all the while, "Ghost" is really a very harmless kind of word, meaning nothing more than a spirit set free from the body. We never associate what is terrible with the name of Spirit; why, then, should its exact equivalent inspire so many people with alarm? In like manner, the word "Apparition" startles many whom "Appearance" would not disturb. Yet the first has become connected in men's minds with appearances, as it is believed, out of the ordinary course of nature; and hence it calls up to the imagination tales of fearful import, traditions of startling occurrences.

It is very difficult to get people to listen to common sense on these subjects. You will find the ordinary run of men professing to reject the whole class of subjects, as utterly frivolous and impossible, fitted only to terrify the ignorant, and perhaps to interest the speculative dreamer.

Ask a clever lawyer, or a physician in full practice, what he thinks of a common ghost-story, and it is a chance that he does not raise a laugh at your expense for the silliness of your inquiry. If he is good-natured, and respects your understanding, he will, ten to one, enter into a laborious argument to show you that there never happened anything out of the common course of nature,—that the hundred stories circulating everywhere are either the coinage of invention and exaggeration, or else that they are all capable of being explained as singular coincidences, accidentally resembling the connexion of cause and effect, but no more. Your hard-headed friend scouts the notion of treating the matter as a question of evidence. No amount of evidence, so he says, could ever establish the truth of

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one of these stories, be they tales of dreams, of spirits appearing, of presentiments, or of warnings, or of any other form which the marvellous of this kind usually assumes. Both your witnesses and yourself are summarily turned out of court, for a pack of imaginative inventors, whom no reasonable man ought to listen to for a moment.

On the other hand, there are very many persons, principally among the ignorant and the half-educated, who hardly trouble themselves to ask for evidence in support of the current stories that fascinate their imagination, and make an easy victim of their credulity. The loosest report, passed through a score of tongues, embellished and magnified at every stage of its progress, is heard and believed at once, be it ever so improbable. We could name printed collections of such stories, which must for ever remain as monuments of credulous imbecility. There is one such work, of great popularity in its day, which, as it is now ascertained, is in part composed of stories invented by a scoffer at ghosts, and presented to the omnivorous author as authentic incidents gathered expressly to assist in completing the volume.

Between this indiscriminate reception of tales of wonder, and that equally indiscriminate rejection of them, there lies a wide debatable ground, including persons who have no rational theory on the matter at all, and who can hardly tell you what they think about it, or why they think so and so; but who are not ashamed to confess themselves human, and therefore susceptible of impressions for which their reason cannot always account. It is to the occupants of this intermediate ground that we address ourselves in the

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following remarks. It is from them alone that we hope for a patient hearing, while we attempt to set forth the collections and the reflections of many years devoted to research in this deeply interesting subject. Besides the interest and the importance belonging to it for its own sake, we have been disposed to examine it in all its parts by a hope of promoting a common-sense view of it, and thus of divesting it of some of its terrors. Nameless and unnumbered agonies are often inflicted on early childhood by the imprudence and folly of nurses, and even of parents, who either by way of management, or of amusement, fill the minds of their little ones with the phantoms of their own diseased imagination. If we could succeed in persuading even a few of these to take a truer and a more Christian view of a subject on which faith can throw some light, our purpose would be satisfied. We shall illustrate what we have to say by a number of examples, all of our own collecting from friends and acquaintances. We shall make use of none that to our own judgment, at least, are not deserving of credibility in a considerable degree; and we shall invariably state the general nature of the evidence on which each of them rests. Some of them we can vouch for, on our own personal experience. Hardly one of our examples has appeared in any other collection; or where such a one occurs, we have met with it in our private researches, altogether independently of any printed account of it. We make no pretensions to having formed a complete collection of such examples, although it will be found to include a considerable variety. We have done no more than offer our contribution to the general stock; not without hopes that other collectors may perhaps be

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induced by what we have omitted, if not by what we have done, to give to the world the results of their careful observation. When we have had occasion to mention the names of living persons, or of the friends of living persons, we have felt invariably obliged to use an initial letter only, and sometimes only a blank.

Before entering on the subject in detail, however, we shall be expected to show (1.) That such exceptions to the ordinary course of nature are not in themselves impossible; and (2.) That their occurrence is a matter to be decided by evidence, like any other alleged and possible fact.

(1.) We are not inclined to drag Scripture needlessly into the question; yet Scripture clearly shows that the common course of nature has been interrupted in ways precisely similar to the examples we have to relate. Dreams have given premonitory warnings of danger; spirits have been seen in bodily shapes, whether those spirits were sometimes good and sometimes evil angels, or whether, as in the instance of the witch of Endor, they represented the disembodied souls of deceased persons.

Among exceptions to the ordinary course of nature a distinction is made, and we will adopt it, between incidents which, both in the manner of their occurrence and in their results, could not have happened in the common course of things, and incidents whose result is not extraordinary, but only the manner or the agency employed in producing it. This class of exceptions is called Præternatural,—beside, or out of the usual course of nature; and that is called Supernatural, —above and beyond the power of natural causes. That a man should walk on water, or that the iron head of

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an axe should swim upon it, is a supernatural occurrence, which no natural means could effect. That a man should, by angelic ministry or otherwise, obtain a knowledge of what is passing on the other side of the globe at the instant of its occurrence, is præternatural, because it is more than ordinary natural means could convey, and yet not more than, in other circumstances, time, and a letter, or a messenger could furnish. The knowledge is natural; the instantaneous speed of its conveyance is præternatural.[1] Yet, if we suppose an angelic messenger, this speed is præternatural only as regards ourselves; it is natural as regards the powers of a spiritual being, among whose endowments agility, or emancipation from the laws of time and space, is reckoned, together with subtlety, or the facility of passing through barriers impenetrable to a material agent.

Exceptions of a præternatural kind, if proved once, and much more if proved many times to have happened, can never be regarded as henceforth impossible. And if we admit the agency of angel-guardians, to whose protecting care we are each of us committed through the perilous journey of life, we have at once a simple explanation of all such exceptions, which will be found capable of solving every case. Over and above this, we have the certain warrant of Scripture for regarding angels in general as ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation.

The tendency of our current literature also points in the same direction. In our own country we have poets, like the Laureate, who, in describing the

[1] See Bishop Hay's incomparable treatise on *Miracles*, chap. i. sections 8 and 9; and the whole of chap. ii.

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Christmas festivities immediately following the death of his friend, mentions,

"an awful sense
Of one mute shadow watching all;"

and who thus beautifully imagines that the spirit of his friend might be present at the nuptials of one dear to him :—

"Nor count me all to blame, if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, though in silence, wishing joy."

On the other side of the Atlantic we may trace the same yearning towards the presence of the beloved dead, in such lines as these of Longfellow's :—

"With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

"And she sits and gazes at me
With those deep and tender eyes,
Like the stars, so still and saint-like,
Looking downward from the skies."

Set free, indeed, from the control of religion, this spiritual instinct of our nature has run wild, in spirit-rapping, in table-turning, and in clairvoyance, as the history of a very few years can testify.

(2.) But because the occurrence of exceptions to the ordinary course of nature is in a general way possible, does it follow that every alleged instance of them must be true? Quite the contrary. Their possibility does no more than keep the question open, till it can be settled on its own evidence one way or the other. The

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credulity of that portion of mankind which professes to "believe in ghosts" has thrown an air of ridicule over the whole subject; which makes it the more imperative on the lovers of fair play to see that the evidence produced has some consistency and a rational claim to belief. We, therefore, propose first to call our witnesses, and hear their testimony, before we offer any comments upon it. As their evidence is laid before the impartial reader, we shall then criticise it, and endeavour to separate what is of value in it from what is doubtful and perhaps open to suspicion.

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DREAMS.

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"Like the bright shade of some immortal dream,
Which walks, when tempests sleep, the wave of
Life's dark stream."

SHELLEY.

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CHAPTER I.

DREAMS.

When we begin to speculate on the mysterious union of the lifelong companions, Mind and Body, we at once tread on the limits of the unknown. The remote depths of Memory, the glowing suggestions of Imagination, lie far, far beyond our intelligence. In sleep the community of impressions affecting the mind and body during waking hours seems for the time suspended; the mind alone is acted on by them, during the temporary suspension of consciousness. Or if a touch or a sound faintly reaches the bodily sensorium during sleep, the mind takes the more vivid share in what follows; and while the instant elapses before the return of awaking consciousness, a long dream, full of incidents, may have passed through the mind with lightning swiftness.

Every one must have at some time or other awoke with a clear and strong recollection of a dream just ended. In a few minutes, however, its outline grows dimmer; before many hours it is recollected only with an effort; perhaps before next evening it has faded entirely from the memory. But it sometimes has occurred to the author as probable that the memory still takes cognisance of the impressions made on it,

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even while consciousness slumbers. The confusion at times experienced by persons, who have recorded their sensations, in disentangling involuntary suggestions of memory from the records of incidents sought for, shows that the fragments of remembered dreams are probably still lurking there, among that endless series of pictures in which the events of a lifetime are indelibly stamped, for good or evil.

A passage in "The Night-side of Nature" will appropriately introduce an occurrence in the author's own experience. Mrs. Crowe observes: "In our dreams, actions and events, words and sounds, persons and places, are as clearly and vividly present to us, as if they were actually what they seem; and I should think that most people must be somewhat puzzled to decide, in regard to certain scenes and circumstances that live in their memory, whether the images are the result of their waking or their sleeping experience. Although by no means a dreamer, and without the most remote approximation to any faculty of presentiment, I know this is the case with myself. I remember also a very curious effect produced upon me, when I was abroad, some years ago, from eating the unwholesome bread to which we were reduced in consequence of a scarcity. Some five or six times a day I was seized with a sort of vertigo, during which I seemed to pass through certain scenes, and was conscious of certain words, which appeared to me to have a strange connexion, either with some former period of my life, or else with some previous state of existence; the words and the scenes were on each occasion precisely the same. I was always aware of that, and I always made the strongest efforts to grasp and retain them in my memory; but I could not. I only

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knew that the thing *had been*, the words and the scenes were gone, I seemed to pass momentarily into another sphere and back again. This was purely the result of disorder."[1]

The author happened to read this passage, for the first time, in October, 1850. Two years before he had himself experienced sensations precisely similar, during a residence of a year in Italy, and probably, at least in part, in consequence of the same cause,—bad and insufficient food. In August, 1848, he recorded his sensations nearly as follows:—As a child, and as a youth, he had been little in the habit of dreaming; only within a few years of the time just mentioned, he had begun, at least consciously, to dream. At the period named, the habit had become constant and painful; he suffered acutely from the heat of an Italian summer, and from the coarse products of Italian cookery, either of which was more than sufficient to account for the derangement evinced by this new habit of dreaming. He rarely retained, on awaking, any distinct impression of the subject of his dreams. Sometimes a vague recollection of it lingered for a while, but a few hours were enough to dissipate it. Sometimes, too, but more rarely, the impression was more vivid; old friends, familiar faces and scenes returned in sleep, with the liveliness of actual presence, and he awoke with as perfect a recollection of their visit, as if he had been actually conversing with them, or moving among them a moment before. These impressions were often not quite effaced after the lapse of some days.

For the most part, however, it was otherwise. During

[1] Night-side of Nature, i. 34.

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sleep he was aware of an unusual activity of mind, which, together with the body, seemed to be labouring constantly and hard, first about one thing and then about another. Long trains of events followed each other, suggesting strange reasonings, and not unfrequently interrupted by those incongruities and absurdities which usually occur in dreams, and of which he was sometimes sensible, in the very act of dreaming. But morning came at last, and the shadows fled away. A feeling of restless exhaustion remained, and occasionally a dim remembrance of one or of another of the odd fancies that had been haunting him. The world of reality succeeded the sphere of dreams, and the phantoms of the night trooped away into darkness and oblivion.

But not wholly, nor for ever. Sometimes a word or an action of another person was sufficient to rouse a dormant train of those visions of the night,—

> ———"it may be a sound—
> A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
> A flower—the wind—the ocean, which shall wound,
> Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound." [1]

The effect was singular and painful in the extreme. The author's first impulse was to ask himself where he had heard, or seen, or done something like that before. The effort to answer the inquiry, by diving into the recesses of memory, seemed only to rouse new phantoms, which then began slowly and darkly to pass in succession before him, as if they had once been actual events. It seemed as if the real world had changed places with the ideal; the persons and the scenes around him grew

[1] Childe Harold, iv. 23.

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misty and indistinct; the conversation, if it went on, was imperfectly understood, supported with an effort, and almost forgotten in a few minutes. He heard, and saw, and comprehended, and thought of what was passing about him, as one might do on first slowly waking from sleep, or when gradually sinking into it; or, perhaps, when partially clouded by incipient intoxication.

Still the mysterious train of Dream-ghosts proceeded; the mind grew weary of attempting to recognise or identify each of them, and abandoned itself to the throng of fancies that had been let loose upon it, and overwhelmed it. These became more and more confused and indistinct, and gradually vanished, leaving the author oppressed by a painful and unnatural sensation of mental confusion, which was sometimes followed by headache. His recollections of what had passed around him during the time were of the vaguest kind; he could recal little or nothing of what had been said to him, or by him; he felt as if he might have been talking nonsense.

These fits of confusion lasted about ten minutes or a quarter of an hour at a time. During the eighteen months immediately preceding August, 1848, they occurred six or seven times, and always when the author was in company with others, never when he was alone. A strong effort to fix the mind on objects actually present, and to arrest the exercise of memory, was sufficient to check the progress of this singular sensation, especially if the effort was made at the first moment when the confusion began. If he then turned at once, with a vigorous resolution, from what had first stimulated his curiosity, to something before him, the

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unbidden visitors came no further; but if they had already begun to pass in review, even for a very short time, it was much more difficult to banish them, and, at last, almost impossible.

The author left Italy in October, 1848, and returned to England. His sensations of confusion were not at an end. Up to May, 1851, they returned thrice. The first time they ran their course, during a morning-call that he was paying a friend; the second and third times they occurred when he was alone—a new feature in the case. On the second occasion he instantly began to recite aloud a piece of English poetry, which distracted his attention, and effectually banished the intruders. The third time of their appearance, they were chased away by a rather tough sum in mental arithmetic. Since then they have never returned.

Another personal reminiscence of the land of dreams the author will add, in the form of two lines of verse, which are all that his waking memory could recover from a number composed in sleep. They appear to be the closing lines of a stanza :—

> Such men are these who earliest win our love,
> Such those who faithful keep it to the end.

He has attempted to complete the stanza thus :—

> Less pliant some, with varying chance to move,
> While some with every change their tact commend;
> Such men are these who earliest win our love,
> Such those who faithful keep it to the end.[1]

[1] A recently published volume of Sir J. Herschel's Essays contains some verses composed by the philosopher in sleep. Every one knows the famous lines,—

> "A damsel with a dulcimer
> In a vision once I saw," &c.

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Only about half-a-dozen times the author can charge his memory with a consistent and rational dream. On one of these occasions, he imagined himself detained, with others whom he knew, in a kind of outer-chamber in Purgatory. As their names were called, one by one, they passed through a door into another chamber. Those who had least to expiate were first called, and in the exact order of their demerit. The author was the last. Immediately before him went an intimate friend of his, whose name he distinctly heard as it was called. At last his own turn came; and as the door of the inner chamber opened, the stifling sense of heat was so intolerable, that he awoke, exclaiming aloud, "*Si iniquitates observaveris, Domine, Domine, quis sustinebit?*" The last three or four words he heard himself pronounce. The impression of this dream remained painfully vivid for many days, and never was effaced. It belongs to an earlier period than that mentioned a little ago.

Another memorable dream of the author's occurred in Italy. He thought he was standing, with one of his earliest friends, in the little country church of P——, in the county of S——, in the west of England. At the east end of the south aisle, there is a stone which seals the family vault of his friend. About eleven months before, he had actually been there with his friend, to visit the resting-place of two of his friend's beloved children, who had fallen asleep in our Lord a few years before; one of them a bright, promising boy, three years and ten months old; the other a tender little girl, aged one year.

The author seemed in his dream to speak of the state of those little ones. His friend, who was not then

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a member of the Catholic Church, maintained that their souls were in a separate place of rest; while the author urged the belief that they were reigning with Christ in heaven. While he spoke, the stone-vaulted roof of the aisle seemed to open, disclosing the sky beyond; and two bright crowns of stars, one of them rather larger than the other, slowly glided down and hovered over the spot underneath which those little ones were sleeping; while a clear and melodious voice was heard saying, "They are not in rest only; they are in glory." Neither did the memory of this dream ever fade.

We now pass to another distinct branch of the subject of dreams; namely, to instances where dreams have occurred as warnings of impending danger. It is here that the advocates of chance coincidence have their strongest ground, as they think. And it must be admitted that, in order fully to test the value of such intimations, it would be necessary to collect a number of instances of false alarms conveyed through dreams; and they are by no means rare. But still, after making what allowance is just for the chance of one case turning out to be of importance among many other cases that come to nothing, some of the cases of this kind on record are so remarkable as to merit preservation, whatever may be thought of their value in a præternatural sense.

A lady, with whom the author has often conversed (though it was not from herself, but from a common friend, that he learned the following story), had a narrow escape from perishing at sea, in consequence of a dream. She had long resided in Russia with her

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husband; and at a particular period in the last war with France, British subjects were ordered, on very short notice, to quit the dominions of the Czar. A ship was fitting out at a port in the Baltic, to convey a number of English families home. This lady dreamed, two or three times in one night, that she saw the ship sail, and in a little while go to the bottom, with all on board. She was terribly alarmed; but, from her husband's resolute character, she knew it would be in vain to attempt to deter him from sailing with the rest, by telling him of what she had dreamed. She, therefore, simply feigned serious illness. To her husband's excessive annoyance, the ship sailed without them: but it never reached England: it foundered exactly as she had seen it.

The following instance of escape from moral danger has so many extraordinary details, as almost to preclude the theory of coincidence, if its authenticity is admitted. It was related to the author in writing, a few years ago, by a lady of singular intelligence. The son of a gentleman intimately acquainted with the subject of the story had put her in possession of it, himself an excellent and intelligent man, who could remember seeing some of the persons concerned, when he was a child. The event itself happened long before he was born.

Miss A—— was residing in London with her parents. They are described as amiable and devout, and as living in a retired manner, suited to their narrow circumstances. Their daughter, however, was to inherit a considerable fortune, on the death of a distant relation. This fortune in prospect had tempted a needy man of

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rank, who had repeatedly made the heiress proposals of marriage; but the worthlessness of his character had induced her parents to forbid him the house. Miss A—— was in the frequent habit of visiting a friend, who resided at no great distance from her father's house. She thought nothing of walking there alone, and she always passed through one particular street, as the most desirable way.

One night she dreamed that, as she was passing through this street, she saw a gentleman, with whom she was only slightly acquainted, standing at a particular house in the street (which she afterwards minutely described), and pointing eagerly to another house, a little way off, and giving her to understand, by his vehement gestures, that she was to go to it immediately. In her dream, she ran quickly towards him; he then told her that her mother had met with a frightful accident, and had been carried into the house he pointed out. She hurried on to it, in imagination; but no sooner had she got inside of it, than, instead of hearing anything of her mother, she found herself surrounded by flames, and heard nothing but yells and screams, and saw nothing but what was horrible and appalling. She awoke in terror, struggling to cry out for help.

The dream made such an impression upon her, that she slept no more that night. It weighed on her spirits the whole of the next day, and she dreaded the coming of night, lest it should return; but it troubled her no more. Its recollection, however, still remained so vivid that she avoided the particular street seen in her dream, and, for many months afterwards, always went to her friend's house another way. At the earnest

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request of her friends, she made a gradual effort to shake off her nervous alarm, by occasionally passing through the street of terror, but always in the company of a friend. From time to time, this was repeated, and always without her seeing anything unusual. By degrees she lost all her feeling of terror, and began to wonder at her own simplicity in permitting a dream to exercise so great an influence on her. Regaining confidence, she resolved one day, about eighteen months after her dream, to attempt the dreaded street alone. After spending a few hours in a house very near her father's, she prepared to go home, saying that she would try such and such a street.

She had not gone very far along it, when she saw the very gentleman whom she had seen in her dream, in the same dress, standing at the same spot, and pointing in the same passionate manner to the same house, as in her dream. She was dreadfully frightened, and felt as if she should faint; but she hesitated only a moment, and then turned and fled, under the strong impression that she had been warned on no account to enter the house in question. The gentleman pursued her, calling out to her that she must go with him instantly; for her mother had been carried into the house, and was dying. She knew that it was just possible, as she had not been at home for some hours. Nevertheless, she had resolution enough to resist every entreaty: and the gentleman, finding it difficult to persuade her, became more urgent, describing her mother's extreme danger, and insisting on her returning with him. It was all in vain, however; her dream was uppermost in her mind; his representations were lost upon her, and in a public street he could not

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compel her to do as he wished. She was too much frightened to appeal to the few persons she met, as would have seemed natural for her to do; she could only hasten homewards, still followed by the gentleman, who at last desisted in violent anger.

On reaching home, she found her mother sitting quietly at work.

Of course every one was mystified by this extraordinary incident, and its exact correspondence with her dream. Her father made immediate inquiries; he called at the house of the gentleman who had accosted his daughter, and learnt that he was out of town,—in the north of England, as the servants believed. Miss A——'s father then inquired at the house into which she had been pressed to go. It had been taken, a month before, by a family quite unknown to him or his daughter. It was not till after a long and patient search, that the house was discovered to have been really taken by Miss A——'s rejected suitor. He had entered into a conspiracy to watch her closely, with a view to inveigling her into the house, where everything had been arranged with consummate art to force her into an immediate marriage. But for the terror of the house, inspired by her dream, she would, no doubt, have entered it without suspicion, on the report of her mother's danger, when the villainy of her suitor and his friends would have easily been accomplished.

Very shortly after, she succeeded to her fortune. She never was married. In gratitude to a protecting Providence for her preservation from that imminent peril, she bestowed almost the whole of her fortune in the service of God.

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Among dreams apparently designed to communicate a warning of danger, there is none better known, or perhaps better attested, than the dream of Mr. Williams, late of Scorrier House, Cornwall. Dr. Abercrombie, in his work, "On the Intellectual Powers," has given the story as he obtained it direct from Mr. Williams, through the intervention of a common friend. About eight days before the assassination of Mr. Perceval, Chancellor of the Exchequer, by Bellingham, Mr. Williams, who had no personal acquaintance with the Chancellor, dreamed in his own house in Cornwall that he saw a little man enter the lobby of the House of Commons dressed in a particular way, and that presently another man, whose dress Mr. Williams also minutely observed, drew a pistol from under his coat, and fired it at the little man, who instantly fell. The arrest of the murderer was also witnessed by Mr. Williams, and he was informed, in his dream, by some of the bystanders, of the name of the little man who had fallen. He dreamed it thrice the same night. His wife made light of it the first time; but after its third occurrence, Mr. Williams seriously thought of giving intimation of it to Mr. Perceval. His friends, however, dissuaded him from it, as likely to end in his being laughed at as a fanatic. On the morning of the tenth day after, the news of the assassination reached Cornwall; that is, two days after the event had happened in London. Mr. Williams soon after recognised in the print-shops the portraits of those chiefly concerned, and their costume, which were precisely as he had dreamed them.

Dr. Clement Carlyon, of Truro, published a book entitled "Early Years and Late Reflections," which the

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author of this little book has not seen, but from which a friend has furnished him with an extract. Dr. Carlyon, who was an intimate friend of Mr. Williams, had often heard him circumstantially relate the dream and its fulfilment. In his book, he mentions having been at pains to compare Dr. Abercrombie's narrative with a MS. account shown to Dr. Carlyon by Mr. Hill, a barrister, and a grandson of Mr. Williams. This account Mr. Hill had taken down from his grandfather's lips, and it agreed with Dr. Abercrombie's in nearly every particular. It mentioned the names of the friends to whom Mr. Williams had confided his anxiety to warn the Chancellor, but who had dissuaded him from it.

Another friend of the author's, the grand-daughter of a gentleman who had known Mr. Williams well, mentions that some of his friends never believed it. Her grandfather used to say,—"Williams never dreamed it until after poor Perceval's death." At the same time it is proved that most people at the time believed it.

The strangest circumstance of all about it is, that the late Bishop Baines had a similar dream of Mr. Perceval's assassination. He was then residing in Yorkshire, and told some friends of it before the event.

It is impossible to avoid an obvious objection to such a narrative. If to warn of impending danger was the design of those dreams, why did they occur, one of them in Yorkshire, and the other in Cornwall? Would it not have been much more to the purpose if Mr. Perceval's next-door neighbour in London had been favoured with the warning, or some one intimate

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with the Chancellor and his family? It is a difficulty which must ever attach to such a story. One thing is certain, that if such dreams are sometimes permitted, at rare intervals, it still more rarely seems to enter into the general plan of Divine government that they shall be permitted to change or modify the course of events. It can hardly be doubted that the Chancellor would have totally disregarded such a dream, if the report of it had reached him even from a personal friend.

A similar objection of wasted or misplaced interposition lies against a large class of dreams, which are said to have intimated the death of persons to their friends at a distance. The author has not undertaken to do more than fairly state the evidence for and against a few tolerably well authenticated instances of what may be considered a præternatural occurrence. It is no concern of his to hide the difficulties, or to pretend to explain them away altogether.

Four examples of dreams, intimating the approach, or the actual occurrence of death, have recommended themselves by their authenticity for insertion in this little collection. One of them comes from a trustworthy source in Suffolk (1850). Mr. H——, a Fellow of —— College, Cambridge, one morning expressed to some of his friends his uneasiness about his father's health, in consequence of what he had dreamed or seen the night before. He had been distinctly present in his father's study at home; had seemed to see the room, the books, &c., as they had long been familiar to him. His father was sitting in his arm-chair, and presently he saw him fall from it, and stretch out his hands to his son, apparently intreating him to come and help him. Mr. H—— thought it very strange, and was

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evidently much affected by it. Two days after he learned that his father, who resided somewhere in the north of England, and is well known as a writer on mathematics, had been seized with a fit, while at work in his study, and, then lying in great danger, showed the greatest anxiety to see his son. Mr. H—— set out at once, but before he could reach home his father was dead.

In the autumn of 1796, an elderly lady left her family residence at L——, in the county of Wexford, Ireland, to visit a son at a distance. She left her married daughter behind her in perfect health, and had arranged to return to her in two months, to be with her at her confinement. A few days after she had become the guest of her son, this lady made her appearance at breakfast, pale and anxious. Her friends questioned her, and she replied that she had been very painfully affected by a dream, in the early part of the night, that she had awoke in much distress, and had been unable to sleep again the rest of the night. She had seemed to be returning to L——, and at the entrance to the avenue-gates, she met a very large funeral, and had seen two coffins, a large one and a tiny one, just putting into the hearse.

An express arrived, the following day, to say that her daughter had been prematurely confined, the night of her dream, and that she and her baby were both dead. A grand-daughter of this lady communicated this story to the author. It is not difficult to see that an obvious intention in such an intimation as this may have been to break the first shock of grief, to prepare the minds of friends for the coming of the fatal news.

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The following picturesque narrative is derived from Somersetshire, through the intervention of a friend.

A Mr. F——, who had exchanged the Russian naval service for the English, had been a long time without hearing anything of his family in England; and he had begun to feel very anxious about them. One night he dreamed that he saw his mother standing in the midst of a wide sandy plain, and weeping bitterly over a funeral urn. The vision seemed to flit rapidly past him; but as it moved away he had time to read distinctly on the urn, the name of EDWARD.

He awoke, much affected by his dream, and, rising from bed, he at once wrote an exact account of it, with the date of its occurrence. He had no reason for feeling more uneasiness about his brother Edward, than about any other member of his family; and it was not till many months after that he heard that Edward, on his march with his regiment through the Caucasus, had been suddenly taken ill, had died, and been buried in a broad plain of sand, at a date exactly corresponding with his dream. It was from a niece of Mr. F——'s, that the author's friend procured the story.

The author is indebted for the following authentic particulars, to his friend Mr. B——, to whom the lady in question herself narrated them.

Mrs. S——, of B——, had a favourite son in India, some ten or twelve years ago; and she dreamed, first that he was ill of fever, and, afterwards, that he was dead. She said nothing about it to any one, but thought much of it in secret; in fact, it gradually prepared her mind for the news of his death, which came some months afterwards. She added her own conviction,

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that a kind Providence had thus broken the force of a blow, which, had it come suddenly, would have given her a terrible shock. This remark suggests an obvious answer to a common objection against the utility of announcing the coming of evil, which no prescience can avert. If it cannot always avert, or modify it, it can, at least, prepare and attemper the mind so as to receive the blow when it falls, with its force partially broken by gradual expectation of its coming. Even this objection must therefore be held insufficient to throw discredit on stories like these.

There is a highly interesting, and not an uncommon class of dreams, by which the ends of justice have been promoted. The Red-barn murder, in Norfolk, for example, was detected some years ago, by a person who had dreamed of the spot where the murdered woman was buried. A case of the same kind, of an older date, has been brought to the knowledge of the author. It happened in this way.

A Mr. H—— was in the habit of leaving his mansion-house, at H——, in Cornwall, in the charge of two of his upper servants, when he went to London. One of them was a sort of general steward, and the other the housekeeper; both of them were of middle age, highly respectable, and implicitly trusted by their master, who, on occasions of his absence, confided to their charge a large quantity of family plate, linen, and other valuable property.

Once, when in London, Mr. H—— received intelligence by letter, from his steward, of an extensive robbery just committed in the house at H——; nearly

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the whole of the plate had been taken away. The servants had already sent for constables, and had forwarded a description of the property to Plymouth and elsewhere, on the supposition that the robbers might escape from England by sea. They begged that the London police might immediately be sent down, as there were some unusually strange circumstances in the case. No clue could be obtained as to the means by which the robbers had entered the house, or had left it; and, strangest of all, a little boy who had belonged to the household was missing—how, no one could tell. He was advertised for, and a reward was offered for his discovery; but no efforts of Mr. H——, and no ingenuity of the Buckets of that day, could find out a trace either of the boy or of the robbers.

Some years passed. The steward and the housekeeper at H—— married, and opened a brewery in the suburbs of London. The story of the mysterious robbery had almost ceased to be talked of; but one night, Mr. H—— underwent something, in his country-house at H——. He could not say whether it was a dream or a vision; but he felt that he must get up, and go and look for something; and the feeling was somehow connected with the missing boy. The first time he resisted it, but it was repeated. Still he did not move, and it came upon him a third time. Then he rose and left the room, under the strong impression that he was following something; and that when he hesitated, as he did at the front door of the house, something encouraged him onwards. In this way he came to the foot of a large tree in the grounds, not far from the house, and then the impression ceased. There he was, in the open air, half dressed, in the faint light

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of early morning. He had no feeling but that the spot was somehow connected with the boy's disappearance.

After breakfast, Mr. H—— told his son his strange adventure; some labourers were set to turn up the soil about the tree, and the skeleton of a boy was exposed, its fractured skull being bound with a damask napkin. The napkin was one of two dozen, of which a former Mrs. H—— had spun the thread, and which were too highly valued to be in common use. The number in the linen-press was counted—there were only twenty-three. The key of that press had never been out of the late housekeeper's hands.

Mr. H—— went up to London at once, and, in company with an officer of police, visited the brewery. It had been his frequent custom, whenever he happened to be in London, to call and see his old servants. Now, the woman came out to meet him, and before he could address her she astonished him by exclaiming, "It is all discovered! The poor boy's skeleton has been taken up from under the tree, and the damask napkin about his head is one of those spun by Mrs. H——'s mother."[1] The woman then fell on her knees and confessed the robbery and the murder.

Mr. H—— usually shrank from relating the præternatural part of this story, except where he was assured of a respectful hearing. The consequence of this habit of reserve was, that few of his friends ever heard the story from himself, and, as he grew older, the succeeding generation hardly knew of it at all. The present version of it was derived from a personal friend, to

[1] Mrs. H—— was the eldest co-heiress of her father, and her husband had exchanged his own name of D—— for hers.

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whom Mr. H—— had himself related it, and from whom the author's informant obtained it.

Another example of this class of dreams illustrates their utility in the more genial service of making accused innocence manifest. This example also affords a useful hint of what may be gained by examining and sifting current stories to the bottom. With a view to exhibiting it in this light, a full detail will be given of the process of investigation which it underwent.

A gentleman residing at Stonehouse (Plymouth), was one day asked for alms by a poor man whom he happened to meet on the Devil's Point. The beggar's appearance told of better days and a decay of fortune, and the gentleman was interested. On inquiry, he was referred to one or two persons for an attestation of the story; he copied their names, together with the poor man's, into his pocket-book, gave him a trifle, and left him.

Some time after, he had a dream. He imagined that he must go to the assizes at Bodmin, in Cornwall. It occurred twice, but he disregarded it. On its again returning, and with such force that he consulted his wife as to what he should do, he followed her advice, obeyed the impulse, and went. He found the town of course full of people, attracted to it by the assizes. To pass the time, having no business of his own, he strolled into the Crown Court, and there, to his immense surprise, he saw the poor man whom he had met on the Devil's Point, undergoing his trial on a very serious charge. When called on for his defence, the prisoner replied, "I have none to offer; there is one person who could prove that I was on the Devil's Point, on such a

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day, and not at the place alleged by the prosecutor; but I don't know how to find that person."

The gentleman instantly gave his evidence, showed his pocket-book, and the poor man was acquitted.

Such was the form in which a friend furnished the author with this story. His friend's informant had received it from a personal acquaintance of the gentleman in question, from whom he had learned it. The evidence of two elderly persons went to show that the story was current in Cornwall, about the beginning of this century. The author had also heard the story from another source, altogether independent of these; and this version of it differed from that only in this additional particular, that, on his way to Bodmin, the gentleman had to cross a ferry at Saltash. He started on his journey in the middle of the night; and as he went along, he wondered how he should contrive to rouse the ferryman on the other side, at such an untimely hour. But when he reached the water's edge, to his astonishment he saw the ferryman coming across for him in the boat, so that he had not to call even once. When the man was asked how he happened to be astir at such an hour, he answered, "Why, Sir, haven't you been shouting for me these ten minutes?"

The author's friend, meanwhile, was pursuing the inquiry for more evidence in Bodmin itself. A person of great respectability there was applied to for any additional facts that might be currently known on the spot. After some time, an answer was received from this person, to the following effect. The general fact was undoubted; but Launceston, and not Bodmin, was the place where the trial was going on. The story was published, many years ago, in the "Youths' Magazine,"

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then edited by Dr. C——, Independent minister at Launceston, and more recently at Penrhyn. This gentleman, on being applied to, kindly undertook to search for a copy of the Magazine. Failing in this, he stated from memory that he had received the story *vivâ voce* about the year 1800. The names of the persons engaged in it had escaped him. The fact related he considered to be substantially correct, well authenticated, and, in his belief, unquestionable. He thus concludes: "There are many anecdotes of God's providential interference in the Percy Collection; I have also inserted several in the 'Youths' Magazine.' Our own individual history would greatly add to the list; for, as Flavel says, 'He who is disposed to observe providences, will never want a providence to observe.'"

Along with his letter, Dr. C—— transmitted his version of the story, as it remained in his memory. The reader will find it an instructive study to compare it with the version furnished by the author's friend.

At the Lent Assizes held at Launceston, some years ago, a man, employed in the dockyard at Plymouth, was tried for stealing King's stores; and when the evidence for the prosecution had been completed, the prisoner was called on by the judge for his defence. He replied that there was a person who could prove that, at the time of the theft, he was in that person's company; but that he had omitted to call him as a witness, under the impression that his evidence would not be required. The judge then directed that this person's name should be called in court. At the moment, the very person happened to enter the court. Hearing his own name called, he instantly made inquiries, and

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came forward with his evidence in the prisoner's behalf; distinctly proving that, at the time of the alleged commission of the crime, the prisoner was actually settling an account with him, and referring to a memorandum in his pocket in corroboration. The judge asked him how he happened to come into that court, not having been subpœnaed. To which he replied, that Providence must have ordered it, to save an innocent man from an unmerited punishment. The judge requested him to be more particular in his explanation, and thus drew from him the following incident:—

"I awoke," he continued, "this morning at a very early hour, in consequence of a dream which deeply impressed me. I thought I heard a voice, intimating to me that I must go immediately to the assizes at Launceston. At first, I determined not to pay any attention to it, and I fell asleep again. I awoke a second time, under the same impression; and I then told my wife of it. She advised me to take no notice of it. After another short interval of sleep, I awoke a third time, with the same strong feeling. It was then about five o'clock in the morning. I rose much agitated, and determined to go to Launceston. Some difficulties occurred as to the possibility of catching my horse, and getting over the river at Saltash. But when I went to the field, I found my horse standing at the gate; and when I rode down to the ferry, the boatmen were there with the boat. On expressing my surprise at finding them there at that early hour, so long before their usual time, they told me that they had repeatedly heard a noise, which they had thought a call for a boat. I crossed over, and came from Saltash to Launceston without delay."

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The jury, after a short consultation, acquitted the prisoner. A medal was afterwards struck in remembrance of this remarkable interposition of Divine Providence in behalf of an innocent man. Such is, nearly word for word, Dr. C——'s account.

But now it turns out that this Cornish case is not a solitary example of such an interposition. Another instance has been clearly traced to Yorkshire. The same intelligent person at Bodmin, as the author has already mentioned, remembered having heard from a Mr. C——, of Truro, a similar story connected with Yorkshire. He was accordingly applied to, and communicated the following memorable particulars.

A gentleman, residing in a country-house in Yorkshire, near the river Ouse, dreamed one night that there were robbers in the house. He awoke, and insisted on searching the house. He was, however, dissuaded by his wife, who had been awake, and had heard nothing. These intimations always come three times; so this dream or impression of robbers in the house returned again twice. The gentleman now rose, dressed himself, and walked through the house, and out into the garden, and from the garden into the road, which led to the river. It was a fine summer night, or rather morning, for one o'clock had just struck. He continued to walk along the road, till he came to the river; when, greatly to his surprise, he saw a boat with a man in it. The boatman hailed him, and told him that he had either dreamed or had been directed to be at that spot at such an hour, to take a gentleman across, on his way to the York assizes, on a case of life and death importance. After some more conversation, the gentleman

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resolved to go on, and reached York in a few hours. Breakfast over, he walked to the court, where he found a trial for murder going on. It lasted a long time, and the case was evidently going against the prisoner. He, however, solemnly asserted his innocence, declaring that he was not in England at the time of the murder, which had been committed in Yorkshire. He had no witnesses to call, until after a long and piercing search among the spectators, his eye discovered the gentleman in court who had come there so strangely. "That gentleman," said the prisoner, "could prove that on the day of the murder, I was crossing from Calais to Dover." The gentleman was taken by surprise, but he soon distinctly remembered that on such a day he had been crossing over from Calais to Dover, and had conversed in the packet with a soldier, who then showed him some scars and particular marks on his back. The gentleman's pocket-book fixed the day of this occurrence, as the same day on which the murder in Yorkshire had happened. He also identified the scars exhibited to him on the back of the prisoner, who was of course acquitted.

Stories of this class, when otherwise well authenticated, are evidently not open to the objection of wasted or misapplied means, designed for a certain end. No amount of interference with the common course of events can be thought disproportionate to the vindication of justice in behalf of the innocent.

The two following dreams occurred apparently with the express object of procuring prayers for deceased persons, and of discharging a debt of gratitude for prayers which had obtained their answer. For Catholics,

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at least, who believe in the efficacy and the value of such prayers, no preliminary argument can be necessary to show that, if the evidence is otherwise good, the purpose of the dream creates no presumption against it.

In November, 1849, Prince Charles Löwenstein Wertheim Rosenberg died. A lady, who filled a subordinate office in his family as governess, communicated to the author the incidents which follow. At the prince's death-bed, which she was permitted to visit, she made a vow to say certain prayers daily for the repose of his soul, in accordance with a wish that he had expressed. When the family was residing at the château of Henbach on the Maine, it was this lady's habit to spend a short time every evening in the private chapel. After one of those visits, about three months after the prince's death, she retired to rest, and in the course of the night had a dream of this kind. She was in the chapel, kneeling in a tribune; opposite to her was the high altar. She had spent some time in prayer, when suddenly, on the steps of the altar, she saw the tall figure of the deceased prince, kneeling with great apparent devotion. Presently he turned towards her, and in his usual manner of addressing her, said, "Dear child, come down to me here in the chapel; I want to speak to you." She replied that she would gladly, but that the doors were all locked. He assured her that they were all open. She went down to him, taking her candle with her. When she came near him, the prince rose to meet her, took her hand, and, without speaking, led her to the altar, and they both knelt down together. They prayed for some time in silence, then he rose once more, and standing at the foot of the altar, said, "Tell

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my children, my dear child, that their prayers and yours are heard. Tell them that God has accepted the *Via Crucis* which they have daily said for me, and your prayers also. I am with God in his glory, and I will pray for all those who have so faithfully prayed for me." As he spoke, his face seemed lighted up as with the glory usually painted round the head of a saint. With a farewell look he vanished, and she awoke.

At breakfast she appeared agitated. She sat beside the prince's grand-daughter, Princess Adelaide Löwenstein, afterwards married to Don Miguel of Portugal. This lady asked her what was the matter. She related her dream, and then begged to know what prayers the princesses had offered for the repose of his highness' soul. They were the *Via Crucis*.

On the night of the 14th of November, 1850, a valued friend of the author's was half awakened from a sound sleep by what seemed to be a person standing by her bed, and saying, in a tone of anxiety, "Pray for the dead."

She did not open her eyes, or indeed pay much attention to it; and immediately dropped asleep again.

By and by, the same feeling of a person standing beside the bed, and anxiously bidding her pray for the dead, was renewed, and this time more impressively. "Pray for the dead; why don't you pray for the dead?" Without opening her eyes she asked, or seemed to herself mentally to ask, would the Lord's Prayer do, as she could not then remember the *De profundis*?—"Yes, the Lord's Prayer would do;" and the sensation passed away. Before the prayer was finished, she was again asleep.

But now, for the third time, as the author is minutely

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informed by his friend, some one again stood by the side of her bed, and, with far more earnestness and anxiety than before, besought her to pray for the dead. Without opening her eyes, she perceived that it was daylight, and seemed in some strange way to feel that this visitant of the night was wrapped from head to foot in a woman's shawl or cloak. "Why don't you pray for the dead," was repeated, "when it's for your own father? You have no idea of the anxiety he has that you should pray for him, now that the time is so short, and you are the only one that can do it."

She was now thoroughly awake; and remembering the former visits and injunctions, sat upright, and repeated the Lord's Prayer, with as vivid an impression of affection for her deceased father, and with as keen a grief for his loss, as when he died twelve years before.

At breakfast that morning, she said to her husband, "What day of the month is this?"—"The fifteenth of November."—"My patron saint's day, and my poor father's birthday." So little had she been thinking of either of them, that she had not been at mass that morning, as she certainly would have been had she remembered either. She was then the only Catholic in her family.

The following story was related to the author, in 1845, by the late Bishop Scott, of Glasgow, a man most unlikely to have been imposed upon by the credulity of another. The author took down his narrative in writing, and subjected it to the bishop's revisal, some months after. The story is therefore exactly as the bishop remembered it.

A man named Witherington, a native of the north

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of Ireland, and a Protestant of the Orange type, after losing his little property at home, came over to Scotland, and unfortunately fell into the company of thieves and depraved characters, some of whom were, in name at least, Catholic. He himself had never entered a Catholic chapel in his life. One night, he dreamt that he was chased by devils along the Salt-market of Glasgow, and ran for shelter into a house, where, on entering it, he found a man whom he afterwards understood to be a priest, engaged in saying mass. Hearing the noise of Witherington's sudden entrance, the priest turned round and bade him be comforted, for as soon as he had finished he would accompany the fugitive home; which he did, both of them walking together along certain streets of Glasgow, to Witherington's lodgings. Before he reached them he awoke. The dream made little impression on him; he, however, mentioned it to his companions. Some time after, he was persuaded by two or three of them to accompany them to the Catholic chapel, in Glasgow, the only one at that day, and served by Mr. Scott, then the sole missionary. Witherington and his companions seated themselves, awaiting the entrance of the priest, and the beginning of the service. The sacristy-door opened, and Mr. Scott came out, when Witherington started, with an exclamation, and whispered to his companions that he saw the man in the strange dress whom he had seen in his dream. He listened attentively to all that was said, and repeated his own prayers with some devotion. He even formed a resolution to amend, which, however, lasted no longer than a week or two, when he returned to his former evil courses.

By and by he was arrested for an aggravated rob-

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bery, committed between Ayr and Kilmarnock, and was taken to Edinburgh to be tried; he was convicted, and received sentence of death. He was to remain in the jail of Edinburgh until the day before his execution, when he was to be taken back to Glasgow; and thence, on the fatal morning, to the spot where the robbery had been committed. His route through Glasgow to the jail was the same as he had taken when flying from the devils in his dream. His route from the jail was the same as the priest had led him back towards his lodgings.

Witherington's companion in the robbery, and under sentence, was a Catholic. Mr. Badenoch, one of the priests in Edinburgh, attended him. Witherington begged to be instructed, and was prepared for death by the same missionary. As the day of the execution drew near, it was arranged that Mr. Scott should accompany the convicts out of Glasgow; and that Bishop Paterson, who then had charge of the Paisley mission, should take his place, and attend them on the scaffold, as the scene of the execution lay in that mission.

The day before the last, the prisoners were removed to Glasgow. Bishop Paterson and Mr. Scott visited them in the jail. Witherington's cell was a dark one; but the moment Mr. Scott entered it, the convict accosted him by name. He was asked if he knew the priest. He replied that, although he had never before spoken to him, he should know his face among a thousand. It may be mentioned that Mr. Scott's face was one not easily forgotten. Its bold, marked features bore a striking resemblance to the portraits of Gregory XVI.

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When the arrangements for next morning were announced to Witherington, the poor fellow burst into tears. Being pressed to tell the cause, he with great difficulty related his dream, and entreated Mr. Scott to go with him all the way; which he did, encouraging and comforting the poor penitent at intervals on the dreadful journey, and finally inspiring him with every hope of his obtaining mercy from the Eternal Judge.

The mention of one Scottish bishop reminds the author of a singular dream related to him by another. It occurred to Mr. Charles Maxwell, a missionary, who had begun his studies in the Society of Jesus; and, after its suppression in 1773, laboured in the secular mission in Scotland, till his death in 1811. While serving the mission around Huntly, in Aberdeenshire, he was called to attend a poor woman in her last illness. He left her, one day, with no very urgent symptoms, and promised soon to return. Very early next morning, the missionary rose, and ordered his horse, telling his housekeeper that he was going, without a moment's delay, to see this poor woman. His housekeeper reminded him that when he saw the woman last, she was not so very ill; and as no message had since come from her, all this haste seemed uncalled for. Mr. Maxwell replied, that he had just had a strange dream about her. He had seemed to see her dead, and her soul judged by Almighty God. When placed in the scale of the Archangel, it was too light, till the Judge threw in a black silk handkerchief, all wet with tears, saying, "The tears of penitence have saved her."

The missionary rode at once to the house of the

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poor woman, and found her not long departed; she was still lying as she had died, and in her hand was a handkerchief of black silk, pressed to her eyes, and wet with tears.

Before concluding the subject of Dreams, the author feels bound to remind his readers of the prohibition in the Catechism against paying regard to dreams, omens, &c. If anything derived from reason could add force to this Divine precept, he conceives that no better dissuasion from such an infringement of the law could be found than in a collection of examples like the preceding. Let any one reflect on the rarity and the uncertainty of such exceptions to the ordinary course of nature, and on the immense multitude of affairs which are in process of adjustment in the world from day to day; and it will certainly appear that it is not in dreams that Divine Providence has given the human family a guide through the mazy uncertainties of life; and that any one who should seek for it there, on the chance of obtaining a clue to his future path, besides transgressing the law, would commit an act of folly.

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IMPRESSIONS.

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"——— spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise."

TENNYSON.

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CHAPTER II.

IMPRESSIONS.

INTERMEDIATE between dreams and visible appearances is a class of influences belonging to neither, yet sufficiently marked to merit some notice, as Impressions of what is actually taking place at the moment, or of what is about to take place. They are sometimes called Presentiments; but, as this term seems to restrict them to anticipations of what is to come, and thus to exclude instances of precisely contemporaneous feeling, the author has proposed to call them Impressions. Coincidence enters very largely, as an element of doubt, into this class of observations, and perhaps in no particular instance can it be altogether eliminated. Yet, in a number of cases, the chances of coincidence, as an explanation, are to a certain extent diminished by the very multiplication of instances; and especially when they occur to the same person. It unfortunately happens, however, that the author's collection is weak in this very class. He has obtained but few cases which have satisfied him as to their evidence; but these few he believes to be as well authenticated as they could possibly be.

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Miss N—— became a nun in the English convent at Bruges, at the age of eighteen. Twenty-three years afterwards, she, one night while awake in bed, had a strong impression that one of her brothers was in a ship at sea, and in imminent danger of going to the bottom. Her rule forbade her to rise; but she sat up in bed, and prayed long and earnestly for him. At the very moment, as she learnt afterwards, her brother, quite unknown to her, was crossing from Boulogne to London; and the ship was in such danger that every time it went down into the hollow of the sea it seemed as if it never could rise again. It was saved. This pious lady, who died only ten years ago, related the incident to one of her sisters, who mentioned it to the author.

Her sister was a boarder in the convent while Miss N—— was passing through her noviciate. They had an uncle who neglected religion, and had attempted to injure it by his writings. One day, Miss N—— said to her sister,—"Let us pray for our uncle; I feel sure that something may be done for him. Let us make a novena (or nine days' prayer) for his conversion." They did so; and at that time a severe accident happened to him. His sister sent for a priest, to whom he consented to make his confession, and give a written apology for his book. He was reconciled to the Church, and died in great penitence.

The author has reason to remember an incident that happened to himself about nine years ago, while he was living in a western county of England, in great retirement. Between ten and eleven o'clock in a morning in August, he was sitting in his room, reading *The*

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Times newspaper of the preceding day (Aug. 22). He often examined the list of births, &c., the first thing on getting the paper; that day, however, he had put it off till the last. The list of deaths was unusually long; and when he came to it, he felt a distinct impression that he should find something in it that nearly concerned him. As he read on, name after name, he was conscious of some surprise at finding them all unknown to him; till all at once, among the last in that long column, he came upon the name of one of his oldest and most dearly attached friends. He is not aware of ever having had a similar feeling while looking over those lists, before or since that particular day.

Many years ago, a brother and sister, of the name of H——, and of Presbyterian family in Scotland, were much engaged in studying the controversy between the Presbyterian and the Episcopalian communions. Miss H—— made up her mind more quickly than her brother, joined the Episcopalian body, and in no long time was married and accompanied her husband to India, leaving Mr. H—— still in perplexity as to his future course in religion.

After the departure of his sister (whom we shall now call Mrs. S——), in October, 184—, her brother informed her every month of the state of his mind, and of the progress which he had made, until the month of January in the following year; after which his perplexity became so great, that he did not write at all in February and March. In his letter of January he expressed a feeling that he might be under a delusion, although at times his opinion seemed to him well

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founded; and mentioned that he was about to consult a Presbyterian minister, in the hope of learning the real tenets of that body.

Mrs. S—— also corresponded every month with her brother: her letters were full of anxious interest in the result of his inquiries, though she disclaimed any wish to influence his decision. Her reply to his unsatisfactory letter of January was dated April 18th; in it she expressed her entire sympathy with his feelings of doubt and uncertainty, having experienced them herself; adding that she hoped he had by that time made up his mind, and that she therefore was looking with anxiety for his next letter. She concluded in these remarkable words:—"I cannot close without telling you an impression I have; it is this,—that I am now writing to a member of the [Episcopalian] Church. I have felt for four or five days as if this were the case. I think you were confirmed on last Thursday (April 13th); whether you received Holy Baptism or not, I do not know, but I think you did; and I think you received the Holy Sacrament of Communion for the first time on Easter Sunday. I have been thinking of you, and following you through all these means of grace."

Mr. H—— was conditionally baptized, April 13th; he was confirmed April 15th; and he received the Sacrament in the Episcopalian body on Easter Sunday. The coincidence is sufficiently close to be worth noticing; and it certainly does not diminish its singularity that it should have regarded a change only from one form of Protestantism to another. Both of those persons were intimately known to the author. One of them, after passing seven years in India,

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returned to sleep, in English soil, the sleep that knows no waking; the other perished in the storm that swept our Indian Empire in 1857. The author took down the incident related, from the dictation of Mr. H——, almost as soon as his sister's letter arrived; the extract from that letter is copied from a paper in Mr. H——'s handwriting, now lying before the author.

Another incident of a singular kind will close the subject of Impressions, as far as the author's observations have reached.

Mrs. U—— commonly resided in London. Somewhere about the year 1838 she went to Brighton for a short time, taking with her a young woman as her nursery-maid. This young person became acquainted with a boatman at Brighton; and soon after, she gave her mistress notice that she was going to leave her service, and be married to this man. Mrs. U—— liked the girl so well, that she determined to put off her return to London till after the girl's marriage; and meanwhile she made many inquiries into the character of the man. The accounts she received were very unsatisfactory; it was even reported that he was already married. However, as the young woman would not listen to any of these flying rumours, and as the man certainly made about two pounds a week by his boat, the match was still to go on.

One day she walked home with him to his house, which stood in a lonely place, away from the town. As they came near the house, his countenance suddenly assumed so ferocious an expression that the girl started back and cried out—"You look as if you wanted to murder me!" At the same instant she

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underwent a feeling that nothing could ever induce her to enter the house; and she resisted every entreaty of the man's to do so. She told her mistress what had happened; the match was broken off; and Mrs. U——, her family, and her favourite nursery-maid returned to London.

They had not been at home long, when Mrs. U—— received a communication from the Brighton police, with inquiries into the character of the girl. The boatman with whom she had been keeping company had been apprehended for the murder of his wife; and her body had been lying in the coal-house, divided in pieces, at the very time that he had tried to persuade Mrs. U——'s servant to enter it.

He was convicted and executed; and before his death he confessed that he had formed the design of murdering the young woman also, if once he could have got her into the house. The likeness of the girl, with Mrs. U——'s baby in her arms, was exhibited at the time in London, as an object of curiosity connected with the murder. The author relates this story as he received it from the lips of Mrs. U——'s brother.

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SOUNDS.

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" ——— a sound that brings
The feelings of a dream,—
As of innumerable wings,
As, when a bell no longer swings,
Faint the hollow murmur rings
O'er meadow, lake, and stream."

LONGFELLOW.

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CHAPTER III.

SOUNDS.

A DREAM or an impression supposes a merely mental operation; nothing unusual is seen, nothing is heard. Even in the case of Mrs. U——'s servant, the mysterious feeling she underwent was only indirectly occasioned by the savage countenance before her. Many thousands of persons every day look on countenances as savage, without experiencing any premonition such as she felt.

But we now advance a step farther in our evidence, and commence the investigation of some cases in which the external organs of sense have been affected in a strange and præternatural way. Notices by Sound include appeals of this kind made to the ear alone. Notices by Sight, or by an Appearance (to adopt a less alarming form of language than Apparitions), suppose that the eye is made the medium of communication. Notices by sound are on the whole less definite than notices by sight; occupying a middle place between those and the airy dream, or the vague impression.

In the month of July, 1850, a lady was paying a visit to two elderly maiden ladies at A——, in Forfarshire, N.B. For about a fortnight she constantly heard, at all hours of the day and night, the crying of a child, as if in the house. She often mentioned it to

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her friends ; but no one ever heard it but herself, and they laughed at her imagination, as there was no child in the house or near it. At the end of a fortnight the body of a child, two or three days old, was found in a neighbouring pond, drowned by its unnatural mother, who lived at some distance. From the time of its discovery, the sound of crying no longer disturbed the lady in question. When she herself related the fact to the author, she added that the sound gave her no sensation of uneasiness, no feeling as if the common course of things were at all sensibly transgressed. It was simply the ordinary crying of a child.

Besides the usual, and perhaps the fair objection against such a story, that the interference was aimless, and without any conceivable purpose, two other remarks occur on thinking on this curious incident. It is remarkable that the sound was heard by one person in the house only ; and it is still more remarkable that the sound ceased immediately on the discovery of the child's body.

We will bring forward our aimless cases first, and so advance to others that have more pretensions to purpose and design.

Mr. A. F—— is a man by no means disposed to believe in ghosts. His family resides at H——. On one occasion he was left at home alone, with only a maid-servant and an old man to keep the house. Towards evening the maid came to ask his leave to get some one to sleep with her, she was afraid to be alone "in that room."—"Why in that room?" inquired Mr. F——. The maid told him that none of the servants would sleep there alone, as it was haunted. On further exa-

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mination, she declared that nothing had ever been seen, but that a loud hard breathing, close to people, was frequently heard there; all the servants knew of it, and had heard it, although they had never mentioned it to the family before, for fear they should be angry. Mr. F—— of course laughed at her; gave her permission to get some one to keep her company, and thought no more of it.

A long time after, when he had quite forgotten all about it, he was by some accidental change put to sleep in this room. He went to bed, not once remembering what he had heard; but after he had been in bed some time, he was awoke by a deep, loud, and regular breathing, almost more than a breathing, apparently quite close to him in the bed. He jumped up, and felt about, thinking that it must be a dog or a cat, and he would turn it out of the room; the deep-drawn, heavy, regular breathing going on all the time, quite close to him. Apparently wondering that he found nothing, he struck a light, and pulled the whole of the bed to pieces; still he found nothing, and still he heard the breathing in the bed. He now called his brothers, who assisted him in a thorough search in every part of the room, and in every place near it that they could think of; still, all the time, under their very hands as it seemed, the same regular breathing was heard by them all, too loud and too deep to be like anything living. This continued for a very long time, while they were all in the room. The servants declared it was nothing new or uncommon to them; they had all heard it, they had all become used to it, only none of them would ever be alone in the room. According to their account, the sound was often heard. Mr. F—— left home soon after, and had no further

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opportunities of testing it; he related the incident to an old friend, whose wife wrote down the account which the author has used, almost word for word.

The following occurrence was described to the author's informant, by the lady to whom it happened. She was residing in the country at the time, and she was engaged to be married. She had just returned home from a ball, and was sitting in her own room, by the fire, musing, before going to bed. It was about three o'clock in the morning.

All at once, she heard behind her a terrific crash, as if the pier-glass had been shivered. She looked round, to see, but it was quite uninjured. She was frightened and perplexed. Next morning, when she saw the postman coming to the house, with a letter, she felt confident that it brought bad news. It informed her that the gentleman to whom she was engaged had died suddenly in the night. She remained unmarried all her life.

Mrs. E——, when a young girl, was sitting in the family circle round the fire, one Christmas evening, in her parents' house in London, about the year 1800. The party was a large one, including two young ladies, cousins of hers from a distance.

Suddenly, in the midst of their amusements, they all heard a large bell toll once, in the very centre of the circle, so loudly that it seemed as if they had never heard the parish-church bell sound louder, to use Mrs. E——'s very words in telling the story.

At the same instant, one of her cousins, a lady about two-and-twenty years of age, started up, exclaiming,

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"I am sure my poor father's dead!"—He had been seriously ailing for some little time. It happened as she had felt; he died just then. The author has to thank Mrs. E—— herself for this little anecdote.

The following story is from Cornwall. At the time of its occurrence, 1849, a lady residing at L—— had an old and faithful domestic servant, whom we shall call H——. His wife lived in a small house close by, and made herself generally useful in washing, baking, &c. Their eldest son, William, had been brought home in a dying state. One evening, which happened to be the last on which the poor youth was able to be down stairs, H—— went into his house to see his son. Just as he entered the passage leading to the kitchen, he heard a clock strike one. It sounded like a large clock; it was preceded by a buzz of machinery; and after the hammer had struck the hour, it left a long booming sound. "What clock is that?" inquired H—— of his wife. She could not tell. Next morning he went, as usual, to see William. As the sick youth had not left his bed that day, H—— went up-stairs to him; and after sitting with him a while, walked into his wife's room, where she was standing. As soon as H—— entered the room, a clock struck one, exactly as before. "What an extraordinary thing!" he exclaimed; "what clock can that be?—It is all wrong too!—But what clock is it?—It sounded as if it came from the cupboard." H——'s wife looked towards the cupboard, and said, "Perhaps it is Mrs. R——'s clock," their next neighbour's. But she thought all the time it was something more than was natural, though she could not bear to say so. The same thing was repeated next night; and

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H—— bade his wife tell Mrs. R—— that her loud wrong-going clock annoyed him. But Mrs. R—— had no clock of the kind. At last, it became a regular thing, whenever H—— went into his house of an evening, to say good-night to his son, the clock was heard to strike, and so regular and plainly, that the husband and wife would bid each other take notice of the manner of the machinery, and of the echoing note that it left around them.

This went on for ten days or a fortnight, when the mysterious clock changed its place. "It's outside the house to-night," exclaimed H—— to his wife, when the clock gave its usual notice of being about to strike. Jane walked to the window; the clock struck One. Then she said,—"It sounded exactly as if it was opposite Mr. G——'s house, at the churchyard corner."

That night William died. H—— had lost two children some years before; but he was then residing in the parish of St. Winnoe, and his children were buried in that churchyard. Now he went to inquire of the sexton of L—— where his son should be buried. The spot pointed out was *at the corner, by Mr. G——'s house*, just opposite H——'s own. And there, where the strange clock was last heard to strike, the young man now lies.

The striking of this clock was made no secret of; it was mentioned by H—— to his fellow-servants, and to the ladies of the family; and it was often discussed as an incident defying explanation. This account of it was taken down, from H——'s own description at the time, by a member of the family in which he lived, from whom the author received it.

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APPEARANCES.

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"Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplished years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

"Come: not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after-form,
And like a finer light in light."

TENNYSON.

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CHAPTER IV.

APPEARANCES.

By far the largest number of præternatural instances belongs to this class: indeed, the common notion of a Ghost-story implies one of them. The author's collection contains upwards of five-and-twenty; and he has found it convenient to classify them under four divisions.

1.—Stories of a general kind, which resulted in nothing.

2.—Stories of appearances before death.

3.—Stories of appearances at or about the time of death; and—

4.—Stories of appearances after death.

But before entering on the subject in its details, he feels bound to say, that, if it contains the greatest number of examples, it also possesses the greatest liability to fallacy. The organs of vision may be imposed upon by disease, by agitation, by imperfect light, even by a highly excited imagination. Thus, a dear young friend of the author's, under the influence of alarming illness in her childhood, imagined she saw in the room "little boys in white, like Edward," a young brother whom she had lost. Another friend of the author's, a man of vigorous and accomplished mind, was walking alone, one evening, in a Devonshire valley.

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The light was rapidly fading; and as he came to a turn in the valley, he was arrested by a sight which for a moment almost paralysed him. Right before him, against the sky, he saw displayed a gigantic cross, rising up from the bottom of the dell, and stretching its giant arms from side to side. He stopped and gazed. What else could it be but a very tall poplar tree, shooting high above the neighbouring copsewood, and seeming to lie across a long, narrow bank of evening cloud, stretched along the sky and unstirred by a breath of air? A person of less vigorous nerve might easily have received a fallacious impression from this natural object, and if given to telling stories, might easily have added an uncommonly good one to his stock. As it was, he drew an instructive lesson from the circumstance; and we may apply it now to our subject.

A more startling incident once befel the author, without, however, deceiving him as to its natural character. He was living at the time in great seclusion, and was much out of health. His bedroom was lighted from the ceiling, and his toilet-table was immediately under the high window, with a considerable space of grey, perpendicular wall between them. On a warm afternoon in summer, after a rather fatiguing walk, and some hours having elapsed since his last meal, he was standing at the toilet-table, dressing for dinner. On raising his eyes by chance from the looking-glass to the dead wall above it, he beheld a reproduction of his own face, only in the counterfeit the light and shade were reversed. He saw on the wall a dark oval outline, with white spots

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for eyes, nostrils, and mouth, and a light fringe above all, to represent hair. It was a little startling, just for a moment, and then its real nature at once occurred to him, as an optical illusion. It faded in perhaps a second or two, but he could renew it at pleasure, by gazing fixedly for a few seconds on the looking-glass, and then turning his eyes suddenly upwards to the wall. Each time, however, the impression grew weaker and its duration shorter, and at last it refused to be reproduced. He never observed anything like it before or since. Perhaps, with a similar arrangement of light, it might be less uncommon, in a highly sensitive state of the visual nerves, and of the nervous system generally.

With such elements of fallacy in the case of Visual Appearances, it plainly becomes us to exercise more than usual vigilance, to avoid sources of error, to detect their occurrence, and thoroughly to sift the evidence in each case till everything suspicious is eliminated from it. Because many such reported instances may be the result of error, it does not follow that all of them are so: our course must lie between credulity and total unbelief.

We now advance to—

(1.) Stories of a general kind, resulting in nothing.

Lord F——, an Irish peer, himself related the following incident to an intimate friend of the author's. One night, about ten o'clock, he was out with some of his servants, looking for poachers. He was standing on one side of a small copse-wood, within hail of his men; his dog, a courageous and faithful creature, was beside him. Suddenly he heard the sound of crashing

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boughs and rustling leaves, as if some one were escaping through the wood. He grasped a heavy cudgel in his hand, expecting a poacher. The sound approached; and presently a shadowy form, like a man of giant size, rushed past him. He struck at it with his stick; but the figure presented no resistance, and he fell over with the force of the blow. His dog crouched beside him in an agony of terror; and from that time neither bribery by food nor threats of punishment could ever induce it to pass by the spot again. It was a long time before Lord F—— could bear to speak of the occurrence; and while relating it on this occasion to the author's friend, it evidently cost him an effort to conquer his reluctance. If one may hazard a conjecture, the giant figure must have been the Evil Genius of the Game Laws.

What follows is perhaps the least like any other story of sound and vision combined to be met with in our investigations. It comes from Suffolk. Several years ago the family to whom it occurred was in great difficulties about some property; a lawsuit was pending, and affairs were much entangled, although not actually amounting to pecuniary distress. The family included a number of children of all ages, some of them nearly grown up, and others quite young. After the perplexity of this family had begun, knockings also began to disturb them in their rooms at all times of the day. The servants were at first blamed; then some of the family were suspected of playing tricks; all kinds of methods were tried to stop the nuisance and discover its cause. Every such attempt was in vain. At last, some one ventured to speak to

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the disturber; an audible voice returned an answer. A conversation ensued; the intruder, whatever it was, answering every question put to it. There seemed no possibility of any trick; so the family began regularly to talk to it. It always announced its presence by knocking; and then, as soon as it was spoken to, it would answer. It gave them advice about their affairs, which they found benefit in following; in short, this mysterious presence soon became established as a friend of the family, and appeared to take a lively interest in their welfare. It always told them of what was being done in their affairs, before they could have known it in any common way; it mentioned several important things of which they had no other possible means of knowing; and through its obliging services they got free of all their difficulties.

The written account of this strange friend, lying before the author, calls him a ghost. But we won't give him that name, as we have no means of knowing what he was. But, ghost or no ghost, he had the good taste to be particularly fond of the children of the family. They had a pet name for him, and delighted in talking to him. He never replied so readily to one among the older members of the family who had committed some act of dishonesty. It gradually became a settled thing, whenever they wanted any directions about their affairs, they asked their friend; but they never questioned him about himself, nor about religion. This intimacy continued for years in England.

By and by the family went abroad, and their friend accompanied them. While they were in Italy, and, as the author's informant thinks, at Florence, one of the children expressed an earnest wish that they could see

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their friend. He immediately replied, told the child to go out into a square, or open space near their house, to sit on such a bench, and his wish should be gratified. The child ran out at once, sat down on the bench, and watched the people as they passed. He sat for a few minutes without seeing anything particular; but presently a tall, dark man, in an old-fashioned Spanish dress, and wearing a cloak, walked close past the child, and looked earnestly at him; he felt certain that he had seen the mystery.

After a time the family removed to Calais. There were now two grown-up daughters in it, who were especially fond of talking to the mystery. They were going to a ball one evening; and one of them said, "If —— would only be there to-night!" giving him his pet name, as all the family did. The answer came directly, "Look out for me, and you shall see me." Both of the young ladies looked narrowly at all the people in turn, but they knew something of every one they saw there. When the ball was almost over, as one of them happened to be dancing, a tall, dark man, in a dress exactly like that described by the child, including the Spanish cloak, walked into the room, passed close to the lady who was dancing, and looked at her very hard. He then went up to an old colonel, whispered in his ear, passed out at an opposite door, and was gone. The old colonel turned deadly pale, and was greatly agitated; in a few moments he went out after the man, but could not find him, or make out anything about him. Every one in the room was wondering who the stranger could be; and next day it was the talk of Calais, and continued to be so for a long time. People puzzled themselves in vain to find out the man, or anything about such a

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man; no one like him had ever been seen there before. The family learnt that he had mentioned a circumstance, which the old colonel had believed to be known to no one on earth but himself.

Finding that it threatened to become a kind of scandal, the family resolved entirely to abstain from talking to their friend; and, in 1851, they had kept their resolution for four years. He still made his presence known, and went about with the family, but he never spoke. They had remarked that his voice had an odd, foreign accent. They still believed that they might renew their intercourse with him if they chose. But during the whole period of their intimacy, before ever speaking, he had always waited to be spoken to first.

This most extraordinary story came, as we said, from Suffolk. We have employed nearly the very words in which an unimpeachable authority has related it in writing. That authority learnt it from a gentleman, to whom the story had come from two independent sources. One of them was a relation of the family in question; the other was a gentleman, who was at the time engaged to one of the young ladies, and who had felt some uneasiness on the subject of the mystery. Supposing all of these sources equally trustworthy, the story is one of the rarest that ever occurred to the author's notice. Of course he does not expect it to be received without very considerable doubt, on such a slender amount of evidence.

Our last story of this class, of the aimless and objectless kind, comes from America. It was contributed in writing to the author, through the medium of a common friend, by an American gentleman who frequently comes to England.

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Eighteen or twenty years ago, a pedlar was travelling through the upper part of the state of South Carolina, as was then a common custom. His principal trade was among the black population, who were easily dazzled with gaudy trinkets. The pedlar happened to display his finery at a plantation belonging to a relation of the narrator; one of the negroes, fascinated by the contents of the man's box, and too poor to purchase any of his brass rings and chains, followed him, murdered him, and, dragging the body by the heels, flung it into a neighbouring pond, just as the winter-night was closing in. Remorse seems to have immediately seized upon the murderer; he could not keep silence in regard to his crime, but asked an old fellow-slave what he would do if he knew that the man who was speaking to him had murdered a negro. The old man, thinking his companion was joking, returned him some jesting reply. "But," resumed the other, "what would you do if I said I had killed a white man?"—"Take care," replied the old slave; "it is not safe in this country to talk like that."—"Never mind," said the murderer, "I have killed the pedlar; I have thrown his body into such a pond, and have hid his box." Frightened out of his senses by this unwelcome confidence, the old slave took an opportunity of informing his master of what had passed. The murderer was taken into custody, and some of the people on the plantation were collected, to search for the body of the pedlar. It was morning before they got to the pond; the frost in the night had been sharp, and the pond was covered with a crust of ice. The body was soon found, and of course life was extinct; but attention was drawn to the position of the arms, which had been dragged behind the body, on its way to the pond, and had stiff-

ened into that attitude. A coroner's inquest was held, the body was laid on a table, and the murderer was brought into the room, face to face with his victim. An incident occurred, which, as an eye-witness declared, sent a thrill of horror through his veins, surgeon though he was. The right arm, which had till then been fixed in the rigidity of death and of frost, suddenly changed its position, and pointed straight at the murderer, with its outstretched forefinger.—There it stopped, and no further change followed. It was probably nothing more than an odd coincidence; and no evidence of this sort, even if it could have been admitted, was wanted to point out the murderer, who had already confessed his crime, and was soon after executed.

(2.) By far the largest number of Præternatural Appearances on record is connected with the death of the person who appears, and which either soon follows the vision, or perhaps occurs at the same moment. Of appearances which have preceded death, three good examples have come to the knowledge of the author.

The first happened in Ireland. The author is indebted for the story to the daughter of the lady whose appearance was seen. The circumstance occurred in 1796. The proprietor of the family mansion at L——, in the county Wexford, had a pretty little cottage, about five miles from L——, to which he sometimes removed for a few weeks at a time, for a little change. In the month of June, in the year just mentioned, his wife paid a visit to the cottage, leaving her daughter, Mrs. S——, at L——, and taking with her a Mrs. G——, an old friend, as a companion.

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One morning, after breakfast, Mrs. G—— went into the garden, and saw Mrs. S——, as she imagined, at a turn in one of the walks. As Mrs. G—— advanced to speak to her, she turned away, and disappeared in a little shrubbery at the end of the garden furthest from the house. Mrs. G—— followed, and, after a vain search, returned to the house, where to her surprise she found Mrs. S——, who had that moment arrived from L——, sitting with her mother. Mrs. G—— had not heard the sound of the carriage; and was bewildered by what she had seen, still thinking that Mrs. S—— had entered the house from the garden, and yet unable to account for her young friend having managed to do so, unseen by herself. On being questioned, Mrs. S—— declared that she had not been near the garden, but had come straight upstairs from the carriage, in company with her mother, who had run down to meet her at the hall-door, and who now confirmed the account she was giving Mrs. G——. This old lady seemed vexed, and surprised that her friend should be trying, as she said, to make a fool of her. "It is not like you, Anne," she remarked, "first to run away from me, and then deny it." When it was no longer possible to doubt the assertion of both the mother and the daughter, Mrs. G—— became uneasy, and said, "It was her fetch, and she will die before the year is out." Mrs. S—— died the following September. Her mother told the story to a daughter of Mrs. S——, from whom the author received it.

One evening, early in the spring of 1834, the younger daughter of Mr. M——, the Presbyterian minister of U——, a country parish in Galloway, had occasion to

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go into the garden. Her father was slightly indisposed at the time, and she had just left him sitting by the fire in the dining-room. The garden of the manse, or parsonage-house, lay on the side of the house next the dining-room, which is on the ground-floor; so that a person leaving the house would pass the windows of the room in going to the garden. Beyond the garden is the churchyard.

Just as Miss M—— reached the door of the house, her father seemed to pass her, wrapped in his cloak, but without his hat. She spoke to him, and begged him not to go out at so late an hour, with his head uncovered. He made her no answer, but walked quickly on towards the garden. She followed; and in passing the dining-room windows, she looked in, and saw her father sitting by the fire as she had just before left him. She still pursued the figure, which passed on before her, through a tall narrow gate, in a hedge, without opening it, and continued its rapid course down a steep walk, leading from this gate towards the churchyard, and ending in an alcove. It flitted through the alcove, and at last disappeared behind one of the tombstones. Miss M—— was soon afterwards found by her sister, lying in a dead faint in the little alcove. A few months afterwards Mr. M——'s illness increased; and after much suffering, he died early in January of the following year. A sister of the author's, who was intimately acquainted with Miss M——, had this story from herself, soon after her father's death; and her manner of relating left no doubt of the vivid impression it had made on her mind.

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A few years ago, perhaps ten or twelve, an accident happened at a ford across a stream in Roxburghshire. A party of two or three people were returning home in the evening from a fair, and missing the shallow part of the ford, were carried down the stream, and were drowned. Some hours before, a person who happened to pass the ford, saw at a distance, down the river, what appeared to him to be two or three people struggling in the water; he ran down to their assistance, but found nothing; only before they vanished he was able to identify the persons who had deceived him. By an accurate comparison of times, this must have taken place before the persons who were drowned had left the fair, yet it was they who were seen in the water. The author is bound to say, that he has no very direct evidence in support of this story. He relates it from memory, as he heard it told to him, about eight years ago, by a person who professed to have made rather minute inquiries into the truth of it.

The third and last story of this premonitory class, is richer in evidence than perhaps any other in the whole collection. It is attested in a letter written by an eye-witness, and it is confirmed by the written statement of a man of character, who heard the other eye-witness relate what he had seen. The incident occurred in Dublin, August 18, 1833. At eight o'clock in the morning of that day, which was a Sunday, Mrs. R——, wife of Mr. D. R——, of North Anne-street Brewery, went to mass, and received holy communion. The moment service was over, she returned home ill; and it was soon apparent that the prevailing cholera had seized her. A medical man was sent for, who pro-

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nounced it to be cholera of the worst kind. Two clergymen were called to assist her; one of them, Mr. W——, of Anne-street, and the other, Mr. J. B——, her own cousin, who remained in the house till all was over. Cramps came on about eleven o'clock, and lasted till about four in the afternoon; then it was supposed that mortification had set in, for all violent pain was at an end. An hour or two after that, her husband, Mr. R——, and her cousin, Mr. J. B——, were sitting together in the window of a small front room, or closet, separated by two larger rooms, from the one where Mrs. R—— was then lying in a state of utter prostration, attended by two women. The lower shutters of the window in this closet were closed. While Mr. R—— and the priest were thus sitting together, and conversing about the probable time of Mrs. R——'s death, with a view to Mr. B——'s remaining, to give her the plenary indulgence, they both of them distinctly saw her come into the room, dressed in white, pass through it, and disappear through the opposite wall, bowing her head as she went past her husband and Mr. B——. They both saw her; but her husband alone saw two other women, similarly dressed, following her. Mr. R—— immediately told Mr. B—— what he had seen; and Mr. B—— replied, that he too certainly thought some one had passed. They both stood up to examine the window; but it seemed that no reflection could have come from it, as nothing could be seen over the lower shutters, which were closed, but the tops of the chimneys opposite. They then went to the wall where they had seen Mrs. R—— disappear, and they struck it, to convince themselves that there was no deception.

After this examination, they sat down again in the

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window, very near the door by which Mrs. R—— had entered. Their astonishment was renewed, when they saw her reappear at the place where she had before vanished, and pass through the room, and out at the door by which she had first come in. Mr. R—— again saw two women following her; while Mr. B—— saw her alone. In describing her appearance, he declared that he never saw her more distinctly, even to the plaiting of the border of her cap. The men were for a moment too much surprised to speak, but each at the same instant touched the knee of the other, showing that the impression made on the vision of both was simultaneous. "Here she comes again," whispered her husband.—"Speak to her," rejoined the priest. Mr. R—— addressed her, but not till she was past; there was no reply.

In a little while after, they saw her pass through the room a third time; and this time she was without attendants. She saluted her husband and her cousin, as she went by; and without replying to the words again addressed to her by her husband, she disappeared as before.

Mr. B—— asked his friend if he had taken anything to drink, but he had not. Mr. B—— then went into Mrs. R——'s room, where he found her with her two attendants, who assured him that she had never moved from the bed; she was indeed quite past all power of moving. He had a few moments' conversation with her, and with her attendants, separately; then returning to Mr. R——, he exclaimed, clasping his hands above his head, "My God! my God! I am gone! I am gone! Of all I ever saw, heard, or read, this surpasses it. I will surprise some of the theologians with this." What had passed between Mrs. R—— and Mr. B——,

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the excited state in which he was, and in which he continued, made it impossible for Mr. R—— ever to inquire.

In the earlier part of the day, a message had been sent to a family, intimate with Mr. R——'s, to invite them to his house to see the last of their friend. One of them, Mr. J. F——, is one of the author's principal witnesses in attestation of this story. His brother and sisters went to Mr. R——'s house early; he followed them, on his return from the country, about six in the evening. He found the family of course in deep affliction; their sorrow was heartfelt and silent, not demonstrative. There were a few other friends, besides his brother and sisters, sitting with Mr. R——, when Mr. F—— entered; he took a vacant chair beside Mr. B——. He had previously gone to see Mrs. R——, but she did not recognise him.

One of Mr. F——'s sisters then stepped across the room to Mr. B——, who was sitting beside her brother, and asked him, in an under-tone of voice, "Shall I tell John what has taken place?" Mr. B—— replied, "that there could be no reason for concealing it." Then both Mr. B—— and Miss F—— related to Mr. J. F—— the appearance of Mrs. R—— in the little front room.

Mrs. R—— lingered through the night, Mr. B—— still remaining with her, as her dissolution was looked for almost every minute. She died next day, at two o'clock in the afternoon, and was buried at six the same evening. At the funeral, Mr. B—— repeatedly said, in the hearing of Mr. R——, and others of the mourners, "that, before that day week, they would be going there with himself; that it would be well if they had not to go twice; but that with himself they most certainly

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should." He did not appear to be ailing at the time, and he was performing all his clerical duties. He died on the Wednesday following, and was buried on the Saturday after. It was not cholera that he died of; some people supposed that he had disease of the heart. He was only thirty-six years of age.

There were many painful conjectures in the family, as to the two women whom Mr. R—— alone had seen following his wife. He sometimes feared that they might be his two grown-up daughters. In a few days, however, *and after Mr. B——'s death*, two other women in the house were attacked with cholera and died.

Mr. J. F——, in the close of his written attestation of these facts, adds, "All those people were religious, honest, and simple-minded, and I would place the most unlimited confidence in their statements." The author, and every one else who has the happiness to be acquainted with Mr. J. F——, can vouch in a similar way for him.

But the most extraordinary part of this story remains to be told.

Mr. J. F——, his brother and sisters, had been for many years intimately acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. R—— and their family. For several months before Mrs. R——'s death, when she happened to call on the Misses F——, she told them of a circumstance, which, without actually alarming her, was giving her some uneasiness. Her children, and more particularly little Sarah, a girl about eight years of age, were constantly telling her that they were in the habit of seeing a person about the house, looking exactly like their mother, at times when it was impossible for herself to be seen in those places. Thus, one evening, when Mrs. R—— was

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gone to market, and her children knew it, little Sarah said to an older sister, a girl about seventeen, "Katharine, didn't you say mamma was out?"—"Yes," was the reply.—"Then look at her in that bed;" and there to be sure she was, to all appearance, in the bed in which she died. At another time, the same child was going down stairs to her mother, and when she got to the door of the room she rapped violently. Her mother quickly opened the door; when the child said, "Mamma, mamma, my other mamma is here!" although Mrs. R—— could see no one. She spoke of this several times before her death, adding, that she would never allow the children to suppose that there was anything in it; but she admitted to Mr. J. F——'s family, and to other friends, that she had no doubt about it, and that she accepted it as an intimation of her approaching death. At that time, however, neither she nor her friends could see any near prospect of that event. She was a very strong, healthy woman, about forty years of age, singularly religious; of uncommon firmness of nerve; very sensible and calm. Nature had endowed her with a remarkably cheerful temperament; she was happy in her family, and always devoted to the promotion of their comfort.

In preparing this narrative for publication, the author has had before him an account of what took place, written by Mr. R——, at the request of Mr. J. F——; also, a statement written by Mr. J. F—— himself, including the account given him by Mr. B——, and other incidents attested by Mr. J. F——'s family. The author must add, that it has never been his good fortune to see so extraordinary a story more unexceptionably vouched for than this.

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It will no doubt recal to some of his readers an anecdote, which had some currency many years ago, but on what authority he never happened to learn. A child had become excessively attached to a favourite nurse, who for some reason or other left, or was dismissed the service of the child's parents. The child was inconsolable for her loss. Time did not diminish her grief; she languished and grew thin; and as the little sufferer became weaker, her nervous irritability resulted in an optical illusion. She frequently saw her favourite nurse, at a particular part of the nursery, close to the fireplace. As a final hope of saving the child, it was determined to have Mary, the beloved nurse, back again; and to give the child a pleasant surprise, Mary was seated at the spot where her image was frequently presented to the diseased vision of her little favourite. The child was taken to the nursery; and no sooner was the door opened, then she exclaimed, with a shudder, "O mamma, two Marys!" and presently fell into convulsions, from which she never recovered. This was evidently a case of disease, preceding the death, not of the person seen, but of the little one who saw her.

(3.) Following the convenient arrangement adopted at the beginning of the chapter, we next enter on the subject of Præternatural Appearances which have occurred at, or about the moment of death.

The intelligent American gentleman, referred to at page 69, obtained the two following stories from a Mr. C——, of Brighton, a gentleman, "whose veracity" he describes as "unquestionable, and whose habits of mental inquiry and investigation go far towards pre-

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venting him from being deceived by false narratives, or fictitious incidents."

It is usual for persons who are candidates for the ministry, in the Methodist denomination, to relate their past "experience" before the Conference. At one of those meetings, at which Mr. C—— happened to be present, as a member, a candidate, not satisfied with the relation of his spiritual experience, narrated many other incidents in his past life. He told the Conference that he was the son of a Spanish merchant, and that, on one occasion of his father's absence in Spain, he remained with his mother in England. One night, after the shutters were closed, and before candles were brought in, the attention of both the son and his mother was attracted by a light near the window. They both saw a man standing by it, with a wound in his breast; and the mother exclaimed, "My husband!"—the son, "My father!" That night, as they soon learnt by post, the merchant had been stabbed in Spain.

The veracity of the young man, as to his impression, seemed to Mr. C—— to be vouched for, by the circumstances of gravity in which he volunteered to relate the story. If it was likely to have any effect on the members of Conference, it would naturally be to induce them to look more minutely than usual into the young candidate's former character for truthfulness. Of course the nature of the impression depends on circumstances very different from his veracity. Whether it was an illusion, or only accidentally coincident with his father's assassination, it is now impossible to say. It adds another, however, to a numerous class of such stories, which seem, by their aggregate weight, to make it almost impossible to attribute every case to illusion or

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coincidence. It may be difficult to clear any one case from suspicion of being vitiated by an element of doubt; but the consilience of a number, well attested, is much more difficult to evade.

The other story, communicated by Mr. C——, of Brighton, to Mr. W——, belongs to India; the time was in the last century. A sister of the lady to whom it refers became by marriage aunt to Mr. C——; hence his knowledge of it. Mrs. W—— was born in Bombay, and passed much of her life there. While she was residing up the country, Mrs. Draper, a relation of her own, and wife of the governor of Bombay, came to stay with her, in bad health, and died in her house. On her death-bed, Mrs. Draper, with strict injunctions of secrecy, told her friend a fact, which was to be communicated personally to the governor. It was of such a kind as that he could not possibly have learnt it otherwise. As soon as she could, Mrs. W—— went to Bombay, waited on the governor, and was about to tell him her secret message, when he stopped her, and informed her that he already knew what she had come to tell him. He then repeated the message exactly. To explain the matter, he went on to say, "that on the very night of his wife's death, as he was lying awake in bed, she appeared to him, and told him the circumstance which she had begged her friend to convey to him." She then moved to the open door, which led into the nursery; as she passed through it he distinctly heard his child (Sterne's Eliza), start up, and exclaim, "Mamma!"

If this appearance was only a dream, it hardly affects the præternatural character of the governor's knowledge.

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He always maintained, and so did Mrs. W——, that it was naturally impossible for him to have known the substance of his wife's dying message. Even if the essence of the message had been already unconsciously in his possession, the fact of his wife's having sent him one, of a particular kind, which he accurately described, ought still to have remained unknown to him on natural principles. The whole affords a curious complication of præternatural circumstances, take it which way you will, unless, indeed, you reject its evidence altogether.

A venerable old lady, upwards of eighty years of age, made a very pious end, in 1851, at the little town of L——, in Cornwall. For a fortnight before her death, she seemed to be dying every hour; at last the end came, one morning at six o'clock. She had a faithful old servant, who had lived many years in the family, and had attended her husband on his death-bed. He had now, for several years, carried his aged mistress every day up and down stairs, and had lifted her in and out of bed, as long as she could be moved. He was not in her room when she died, but was up-stairs, half-sitting, half-leaning, on an unmade bed, in the man-servants' room. The other man-servant was asleep in a bed in the opposite corner of the room. At one end of the room was the door, and directly opposite to it the window. H——, the old servant, was not asleep. It was in the depth of winter, and he thinks he had no light in his room; but what presently occurred took such hold of his mind afterwards, that he cannot undertake to speak with certainty as to the light.

Presently his aged mistress entered the room by the

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door, in a night-dress of snowy whiteness; her face seemed to wear a bright sort of flush. She stood still, and looked at him, for a second at least, with a very perceptible smile; and then she disappeared, as it seemed, by the window. At the very same instant the church-clock of the town struck six. Then this old servant, as he is almost certain, struck a light; and calling his fellow-servant, bade him get up and dress, adding, "I think we shall soon be wanted." His companion asked, "Why so?" "Never mind, let us get up." They got up accordingly; the old man at once; the other after a little delay. Before the younger servant could finish, a son of the old lady's came to the door, and said, "Come down, my mother is just dead." "Just dead, sir?" replied the old servant, looking at his watch; "she died twenty minutes since." He was quite right.

The author is indebted for this story to a daughter of the old lady's. She had it direct from the old servant, and when she had written it down, she read it over to him, and he signed his name to it. It may, therefore, be justly considered as a story authenticated at first hand. To one who knew the old lady's habit of tender considerateness for others, the story appears entirely in harmony with her character. She never forgot a kindness; and it seems far from improbable that she may have missed her old servant from her death-bed, and, if such things are permitted, may have taken this method of bidding him farewell.

The following story found its way into the author's collection, through the kindness of a valued friend, the language of whose narration seems to be in itself so

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beautiful, as to make it desirable to preserve it almost exactly as it stands in his written account of the incident. At the time of its occurrence he had known John Miller and his wife for some years very well; they were elderly people, living at Sloane-court, North-street, Upper Chelsea; and John, who was a coach-painter, had been for some years quite blind, and partially paralysed, through the effects of his trade. While his wife was out, his life was quiet and solitary; he used to dwell much in thought on portions of Holy Scripture, which his wife had taught him. It seems that his eyes had been opened to the realities of faith, and of an unseen world, only since the closing of his vision to the material world around him. The poor fellow's delight was great, when he found, on repeating his favourite chapters, to the narrator of this story, that there were others in the world who knew and loved them too. His pleasure was increased to find a person who knew familiarly his old country home, and who could feel with him about the beauties of Cheddar. When he spoke of the home of his boyhood, the very tones of his voice would change; he spoke with a strong Somersetshire accent, of his love for the spot, and of his ardent longing to see the place, and its blue hills, once more. The passion seemed to have returned to him in his state of darkened vision, and after years consumed in all the bustle and the hardness of his London life. His wife had little feeling with him on this subject. She would smile almost contemptuously at anything beyond the visible world of her close room, and her little court; and seemed unable to enter into his enthusiasm, on either of the subjects next his heart;—his old home and his religion. Her feelings and her

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yearnings were satisfied with what she saw around her, and with her duties as a chapel pew-opener.

Meanwhile trouble came upon the little family, through a stupid son-in-law, a shoemaker, who had fallen out of employment, and who now resolved to travel to a distance in search of it: to save expense, his wife was to return to her parents, while he was absent for a few weeks. She made a third occupant of their one little room. Within a week or so from this time poor old Miller was taken ill, and another stroke of paralysis rapidly closed his earthly course. The widow and her daughter made what little preparation they could for the last duties to his remains; regretting that he had died while Thomas was away, and not knowing where to send to inform his son-in-law of what happened.

The evening after John's death, however, or rather, late at night, the mother and daughter were awoke by a call, and by something thrown up against the window; for they lived on the first floor. Mrs. Miller put her head out of window, and, as she expressed it, was struck "all of a heap" to see Thomas. "'O Thomas, says I, 'is it you? Father's gone.' —'Yes,' says he, 'I knows it, and that's why I am come home.'—So," continued the poor woman to the narrator of the story, "so I wondered how he could know; and only put my petticoat on, and went down and let him in; and then he came up, and told us all about it. He was down in Bucks, or in Berkshire, near about Oxford ways, and was walking along a field just fresh ploughed up, and looked up, and saw father coming along straight up the field. Thomas was quite in a maze, as father had not walked so many years; so he said to him, 'Father,

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how are you?' But he passed on, without turning or speaking, close to Thomas, looking solemn rather, with his face set towards the country further on. So then Thomas felt it must be a token, and that father was gone; and so he turned, and walked up to town as soon as he could. It was just the same hour as he was taken that Thomas saw him, just ten o'clock, last Tuesday."

"If," adds the narrator, "the departing spirit is permitted to linger among its most loved haunts, old Miller's would certainly seek his early home. This was my own fancy, on this story; and I think it was the widow's, if I remember. But she only said she could not help believing what she knew had happened; and I have told you, as near as I remember, in her words."

The author's informant adds, on further recollection, that just before he died, Miller had said how much he should like to be in the country once more, and see the green fields; and he made a motion with his arm as if he were mowing the hay. It appears also that Thomas observed him make a similar motion with his arms, in the field where he met him.

Two brothers of the name of L—— had made an engagement, some years ago, to go down together from London to Norfolk, to shoot. When the time arrived, one of them was too ill to move, so the other went alone. One night, as he lay awake, about half-an-hour after getting into bed, he saw, by the expiring light of the fire, a figure approaching his bed. He called aloud to it, and jumping up, seized the poker; and as the figure retreated towards a closet in one corner of the

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room, he struck at it, but without touching anything. Before it disappeared, it turned round, and presented so haggard and ghastly a face, that the pursuer instantly fainted, and lay in that state till the morning.

During breakfast an express arrived to summon him to the death-bed of his brother, who had become rapidly worse. He set off immediately; and on reaching the house, he went straight up to his brother's room. The nurse met him, and told him that his brother, she believed, was asleep, and that the sick man had been anxiously asking for him. He entered the room, and walked towards the bed; the sick man hearing a noise, turned his face towards it, when his brother instantly recognised the death-like countenance of the figure that he had lately seen, and exclaimed, "I have seen that face before!" The author has this story direct from an officer who knew both of the brothers.

A relation of the author's, a gentleman totally free from a romantic constitution of mind, was summoned from a distant county in the south of Scotland to his father's death-bed. He travelled post, night and day, till he reached the house, but he was too late to see his father alive. As he drove down a secluded glen, or valley lying under snow, in the dead of night, he distinctly saw his father's face presented at the window of the post-chaise. It remained a moment, and then vanished. He has described the incident to the author. Yet, in circumstances like those, even the most practical mind might receive an erroneous impression from the intensity of its feelings, and from the keen suspense in which this hurried and fatiguing journey was performed. Such an incident, even although it rests

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only on a probable basis, is worth preserving, as one contribution more to the general stock of facts, on which alone theory can be satisfactorily and wisely built.

A daughter of the Danish consul at H—— was engaged to be married to a young sailor of the name of Johnson. He was away at sea, off the coast of China; she was ill in bed at H——, and her sister, who had been sitting beside her, happened to go for a moment to the window, when whom should she see but young Johnson coming down the street! She called out to her sick sister, "There's Johnson; now he's crossing the street; now he is coming to the door." She waited a minute, expecting him to knock or ring; but hearing nothing, she ran down stairs to inquire about him. The servants had heard nothing of him; but so convinced was this young lady that she had seen him, that she sent to the houses of several of his friends, to ask if he had not arrived. They knew nothing of him, however, except that he was on the China station.

The young lady's family talked a great deal about him, and even accused him of having been at H——, without going to see his friends; attributing discreditable motives to his clandestine visit to the town. Nothing more was heard of him for some time; and he was never seen again. By and by news arrived that he had been drowned on the China coast, about the time that he was seen at H——.

The authority for this story is derived, through one intermediate person, from a clergyman who is personally acquainted with one of the families concerned.

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A remarkable instance of a strong desire, at the moment of death, of visiting a particular person, and accompanied by a coincident appearance to that person, is derived from Bridgewater. A gentleman who resided there was very ill, and his friends were looking almost hourly for his death. He had an overpowering desire to see his son, a youth about eighteen years of age, then with his ship on a distant foreign station. It seemed as if the old gentleman could not die without seeing his son. After lying quiet for some time, he opened his eyes, and said, "I have been to see him, but it was another, and not he;" and soon after he expired.

That night his son's ship was lying at anchor off a foreign town. The young man had invited a friend from shore to dine with him, who was to return in the evening in his own boat. It did not arrive in time, however; and as the ship's boats were all engaged, he had to remain all night on board. His young sailor friend gave up his own berth to him, and found another for himself, elsewhere. Next morning, the guest of the young man informed his friend that he was wanted in the night.—"Who? I?"—"Yes; an old man came into your cabin; and though he did not speak, I could see by his looks that he was searching very anxiously for you."—"An old man! nonsense; there is no such person in the ship; you must have been dreaming."—"I was not dreaming, I assure you; I had not been many minutes in bed, and I was wide awake."—The incident seemed so strange, that the young man entered it in his journal; and the time was found to correspond with his father's remark. The young sailor afterwards rose to the rank of captain;

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and the story comes from himself, through our intermediate narrator.

The most incredible part of it seems to be this: if by some unaccountable means the spirit of the old gentleman could find his son's ship, how was it that he could not also find his son's temporary quarters in the ship? The difficulty, no doubt, throws an air of discredit on the story, to which there is little to oppose, but the veracity of those concerned in transmitting the account.

The next story of a similar kind was communicated to the author by a friend who is intimately acquainted with all the persons concerned in it. It derives an additional interest from the graphic language in which it was narrated to the author, and which he proposes to preserve, with as few alterations as possible.

John May was a sailor, the only son of Richard and Joanna May. Richard was gardener to a Cornish gentleman, the father of the author's informant, who put the story together from the narration of nearly all the persons engaged in it. The gardener's residence was a cottage about half a mile from the gentleman's seat. Tremarren is a village on the same estate.

It happened on a beautiful night in autumn,—a Sunday night or Monday morning,—in a fine, soft starlight, and without a sigh in the wind. All the rooms in May's cottage were on the ground-floor; the bedroom was next the kitchen, into which the house-door entered. The door between the bed-room and the kitchen was open. Joanna was in bed, when she heard a voice call her. She was to be at the gentleman's house at four in the morning to wash, and her first

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impression was that she was late, and had been sent for. She sat up, woke her husband, and she then distinctly heard, "Mother," and recognised her son John's voice. It seemed loud and distinct, yet without being either rough or screaming. She at once answered; and, turning to her husband, she said, "Richard, John is come." She then threw some loose garment about her, and went to the door. She opened it, and there stood her son. It was bright, clear moonlight; and she saw him distinctly, close to her. His hat was off, and he was dripping wet. She had the impression that a flagstone of granite, before the door, and raised like a low step, was wet with the water running from her son's clothes. He was not looking at her, but was standing with his back half turned towards the door, his right shoulder turned towards her, and his face looking up to the sky. His head was thrown rather back. His whole attitude showed her the right side of his face, the outline towards the moonlight being unmistakeably clear. She uttered some exclamation, and tried to clasp him in her arms; but with the attempt everything passed away, and her arms came back to her empty. Nothing remained but the clear moonlight; although she would always insist that she had stood on the wet step, and that it was really wet, and she had felt it so.

She returned to her room in great trouble, fully believing that her son was dead; for, she said, she had heard of such things happening in connexion with sailors before. The following morning, when she went to the house to wash, she told the story to the butler; and in a few hours it was known to the whole household.

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The same night, her married daughter, Honor Bond, living twelve miles off, at Tremarren, dreamt that her brother John was by her side, and that she said to him, "John, how is it that you are here? Your ship is not home." He replied, "The boat is on shore; go and see." She fancied in her dream that she rose up, went to the beach near at hand, and saw an empty boat gently tossing about and not moored. She then thought that she returned to her cottage, hoping to see her brother, and ask him what it all meant; but she awoke greatly agitated. Before her mother's story was known, Honor had mentioned her dream to several persons.

Five months passed, and still there was no news of John May. Then there came a letter from a friend of his, who had once been home with him, to say that on the night when he had been seen in Cornwall, a boat had been sent on shore for water, somewhere in the West Indies, with John among the crew. The boat was upset, and all were drowned, except two, who were picked up by a Spanish vessel. John May was not one of them. Honor Bond adds, that, by the age of one of her children, she calculates the strange visit of her brother to have happened about the year 1819. The author is informed by his friend that the veracity of all those people may be depended on. The butler, his wife, and Honor Bond have frequently heard Joanna May describe every circumstance, both by word and action. It seems impossible that a story of the kind should be better attested.

The two following stories are from Ireland, and are contributed by an Irish lady of great intelligence, and very nearly related to the subjects of the narrative.

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This lady's paternal grandfather and his four young sons were sitting one evening round the drawing-room fire, expecting her grandmother, who was up-stairs with a sick baby, to come down, in a few minutes, to make tea. The door opened, and a lady's head and shoulders appeared. One of the boys, who sat facing the door, started up, and said, "It is aunt P——." As he went towards her, the figure retired, and the door closed. The boy felt a strange sensation, to use his own words, and repeated, "It *was* aunt P——." His father declared it to be nonsense; that it must have been his mother; baby was, perhaps, worse: he had better go up and see if she wanted anything. Two of the boys accordingly went up to their mother. She had never left the child, neither had any of the maids been near the drawing-room.

Mrs. P——, the boy's aunt, by his father's side, had long been in delicate health, but was not thought to be in immediate danger; her brother even hoped to see her again. She died that evening, at a distance.

The same intelligent Irish lady, to whom the author is indebted for the preceding anecdote, and for one or two others in this collection, informs him that her grandmother was much attached to her eldest sister's husband, Mr. C——, who lived about a hundred and fifty miles from her own residence at ——, in the county of Wexford. One summer's evening, as she was sitting at an open window, looking into a flower-garden, in company with a lady, she suddenly started up, exclaiming, "There is William C——!" She ran out of window, but he was gone. She, nevertheless, insisted that she had seen him, and that, as he passed, he

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had looked earnestly at her. She was a person of strong sense, and was scrupulously exact in all that she said.

Mr. C—— died suddenly, that evening, at his own house.

About the year 1822, the Welsh Archdeacon of B——, Mr. D——, had a niece married to a medical gentleman at Edinburgh, of the name of G——. Shortly after the birth of her first child, as Mrs. G—— one night lay awake, she saw her aunt, Mrs. D——, who was then living at B——, in Wales, enter the room, walk across it to the bed where the infant was lying, open the curtains, and, after looking in for a few moments, close them again, and walk out. The news of Mrs. D——'s death, that night, reached her in a few days. The sister of the author's informant received the story from Mrs. G—— herself.

Through another highly intellectual friend, the author has obtained the following particulars from Mrs. B——, widow of Colonel B——, of Lunan. This lady's grand-aunt was married to a Colonel F——, who was employed with his regiment on active service in the West Indies, during the last French war. Mrs. F——, meanwhile, lived at a fashionable provincial town in England, where she could gratify her inordinate passion for play. One evening, at a card-party, she was observed to drop her cards, and to stare round the room, as if she were following some object that was moving through it. When asked what was the matter, she replied that she had seen her dying husband carried from a field of battle, on a blanket borne by four men,

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and covered with a white flag. As he passed her, he turned his head and looked hard at her. Of course, her friends tried to persuade her that it was all fancy. Besides employing the common arguments, they remarked that the incident of the white flag was most improbable, as there was no such thing in his regiment. She, however, was fully persuaded of his death, and, returning home immediately, she made a note of all that she had seen, together with the date of its appearance.

In the course of post she learnt that Colonel F—— had been mortally wounded, and carried from the field, exactly as she had seen him: a white flag, just taken from the enemy, had been thrown over him. He had died immediately, and his last words had been of his wife. The day and the hour coincided with his appearance to her at B——.

We now go abroad, first to the island of Barbados.

The wife and family of an English clergyman were living there; he was absent in England on business, and his return was daily expected. At daybreak, one morning, his wife, who was sleeping, with one of her children by her side, was suddenly awoke by hearing her husband's voice calling loudly from a small dressing-room, adjoining her bed-room. He seemed to be calling, "Mary! Mary! make haste with my clothes; I must dress, and go. Make haste! make haste!" She sprang out of bed, and ran across the room; and she reached the dressing-room door before she had recovered herself sufficiently to recollect that it must be a delusion, and that her husband could not be there.

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She then returned to bed, and found the child crying bitterly, "Oh, mamma! why don't you go to poor papa? He has been calling you this long time." The poor lady was too much agitated and depressed to sleep any more; she therefore dressed, and went downstairs. The first person she met was a faithful old negro nurse, who had reared two generations of the family, and loved them as if they had been her own children. Her mistress asked her how she did. "Oh, werry bad, missis!—werry bad! Here my poor boy been stand by my bed all night, saying, 'Me go away, —me go away. Nurse, take lady and children up to plantation.'"

The gentleman died that night at sea, on his voyage out.

Here we observe the singular coincidence of three persons hearing the gentleman's voice, the child apparently for a longer time than her mamma, and the old negro woman quite independently of either; for she heard her master speak in a way quite different from the language he addressed to his wife. The source from which this story comes, though not as direct as could be wished, yet is derived from at least two unimpeachable authorities.

We now travel to India, where we find a Captain M—— expecting the arrival of his brother in a few days. The captain was a good swimmer and diver, and, with some of his brother-officers, frequently enjoyed the refreshment of bathing in a tank. One day, while amusing himself in this way, he dived to the bottom; but remained so very long under water as to alarm his companions. One of them dived after him,

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and found him at the bottom, struggling violently, as if wrestling with an enemy. The diver seized him by the hair, and dragged him up.

When he reached the surface, Captain M—— was insensible, but, under the influence of restoratives, soon recovered. He told his astonished friends that he had seen his brother at the bottom of the tank, who had caught hold of him, and pulled him down; and if he had not been rescued, he must have perished; for he had felt utterly powerless to save himself.

His brother was that day drowned at sea.

The authenticity of this very original story is vouched for by the same persons who attest the last, and of whose credibility the author has the amplest assurance. He knows of no story that, on the assumption of its truth, so completely defies any attempt to account for it. Here not only an impression is alleged to have been made on the imagination, or otherwise, by the presence of Captain M——'s brother, but an amount of physical force is exercised, sufficient to produce the death of the captain by drowning. It might, perhaps, be said, that the fancy, in nightmare, exercises a force on the body almost equivalent to mechanical energy. But here the conditions of the story seem to preclude any such influence. It is just possible, however, that some constitutional peculiarity in the captain's nervous system may have induced a state similar to the imbecility of nightmare, or the spasmodic effects of some well-known nervous diseases.

(4.) Although stories of appearances after death have usually less point and less interest than the classes of stories which have just been reviewed, the author has

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been fortunate enough to meet with a few, of such a character, and so well attested, as to justify the dedication of a section of his record to their preservation.

The first has a wild and indefinable character, is apparently destitute of an object, and may, therefore, perhaps, be considered as more than commonly improbable. But it comes with a respectable attestation, which must secure it a place here, and a recognition for what it may be worth.

The coast of South Carolina is edged by long, sandy islands, divided from the mainland by salt-marshes, which are filled with oyster-beds, and are on that account a favourite resort of hordes of racoons, who prefer shell-fish to any other diet. A Scotchman of the name of Miller, who had made a good deal of money as a baker, was in the habit of going, early in the morning, to one of those islands, called "The Folly," near Charleston Bar, to shoot racoons, and breakfast with a set of companions of a rather jovial and roystering character. Soon after daybreak, on a misty morning in January or February, in the year 1844 or 1845, Mr. Miller was driving his gig along the unfrequented and sandy road which led to their place of meeting, when he saw a woman walking on before him; and, as he overtook her, he perceived that she wore a black silk dress. His surprise would have been great to see any woman in such a place, and at such an hour, but it astonished him much more to see a woman of the condition indicated by her dress, and in a country where ladies are seldom seen on foot, or unattended. She paid no attention to the approach of his gig, and he was obliged to turn aside from the road to avoid running over her.

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believed the story he told. The author's informant, in the written account of it which he furnished, has well suggested that, if the incident is admitted, it presents some points of uncommon interest, beyond its contribution of another instance to the proof of intercommunication between the living and the dead. It points to the fact that the knowledge acquired in this world is not lost in the next; Mrs. Cordeaux retained her facility of reference to the sacred volume. It also appears to suggest that the communication of the living with the dead is easier, or more direct, when the survivor has his conversation as becomes a Christian; and, again, that even when the departed cannot be present with their living friends, they are able at least to hear of their affairs.

The author would add that, strictly speaking, it is only the assumed application of the text by Mrs. Cordeaux that will bear any of these interpretations. St. Paul's original words have no such meaning, being addressed by a living apostle to his living disciples.

In an English county, there is a family which is often visited by an ancestor, whose portrait may still be seen at the family country-seat. This old gentleman appears when any event of importance to his family is about to happen; and they can tell by his look and manner whether the coming event is to be of a joyful or of a sorrowful kind.

One night, a few years ago, a daughter of this house, then a young woman, who had never been told of these visits, was alarmed in her sleep by the figure of an elderly gentleman, leaning over her, as she lay, with his hand on her breast, and an expression of the

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intensest sorrow and fear in his countenance. He was so close to her, that, if she had raised herself ever so little, she must have touched his face.

She screamed with fright, and brought the whole household about her bed. When she told her story, her father knew what it was, but laughed it off, as a dream or fancy of her own.

Before the lapse of a month, a severe domestic affliction befel the family.

For this story the author has to thank a friend who knows the family perfectly well. The story evidently belongs to a class of appearances familiarly known among several English families of antiquity. At one time, the appearance takes the form of a lady in white, walking in the neighbourhood of the family seat, or perhaps through its mysterious corridors; at another, it assumes the shape of a white hare, gliding at twilight in the gloom of an avenue arched over by the foliage of venerable trees. Severe illness, death, or disaster is generally said to follow appearances of this kind.

When the Benedictine College at Ampleforth, in Yorkshire, was building, a few years ago, one of the masons attracted the attention of the community by the interest which he took in the incidents of their daily life. He had to walk from a village three miles off, so as to be at the college every morning by six o'clock. He was first much pleased with the regularity of the community, whom he always found in the church, singing the Hours before mass, on his arrival in the morning. By degrees he was taught the whole of the Catholic doctrine, and was received into the

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Church. None of his family, however, would follow his example. Exposure to cold and wet brought on an illness, of which he died, in a very pious manner. A short time after his death, his wife was one morning sweeping about the open door of her house, when her husband walked in, and sat down on a seat by the fire, and began to ask her how she did. She answered that she was well, and hoped he was happy where he was. He replied that he was, at that time; that, at first, he had passed through purgatory, and had undergone a brief purification; but that, when this was ended, he had been taken to the enjoyment of the bliss of God in heaven. He remained talking to her some little time longer, then he bade her farewell, and disappeared.

The woman applied to a Catholic priest for instruction; and it was found that, although she had never in her life read a Catholic book, nor conversed about the Catholic religion with any one, she had acquired a complete knowledge of the doctrine of purgatory from that short interview with her husband. She, too, became a Catholic.

The author was told this story by one who was a member of the community at Ampleforth at the time.

The following anecdote affords so good an example of the necessity of extreme caution, and a rigid scrutiny of evidence, before admitting the authenticity of a preternatural relation, that the author is tempted to enter into it with some minuteness of detail.

In the year 1852, an esteemed friend of his sent him some particulars of a "ghost story," professedly derived from persons directly concerned in it, and

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related, by a gentleman now deceased, in the presence of several friends who were afterwards consulted as to the particulars. The story was in general to this effect: that, a few years ago, a lady, then on her first visit to C——, the seat of Lord ——, found herself, by mistake, in the library, instead of the drawing-room, as the company were assembling for dinner. They sat down to dinner without her; and when she afterwards joined them, she remarked that she had at first felt some misgivings about her having mistaken the room, but that she had been re-assured by observing a clergyman, whom she imagined to be the chaplain, sitting in an arm-chair, where she had left him on the servant coming to fetch her to dinner. This figure, it seems, was at once pronounced to be the C—— ghost, familiar to the household, and more especially to Mr. H——, the chaplain, who, it was alleged, had frequently met it in the galleries, but without ever accosting it. It was then suggested that the next time Mr. H—— met it he should inquire the purpose of its appearances.

An opportunity ere long occurred: so the story proceeds. Mr. H—— questioned the reverend figure, and was informed by it that it had been condemned thus to haunt the house till some one should accost it, and assist in removing the cause of its penal wanderings. In a volume in the library, to which it gave a minute reference, a written, general confession, left there by it, through an oversight, would be found; and if destroyed the ghost would trouble the household no more.

The story, of course, proceeds to say that the chaplain searched for the MS. and found it, and disposed of it as he had been directed; and that, since then, the C—— ghost had not been seen again.

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On the principle which the author has endeavoured to apply to all his stories, he at once proceeded to test the truth of this tale, by applying, through a common friend, to Mr. H——, whose reply now lies before him. It entirely demolishes the incidents, as far as they relate to himself, or to anything within his personal knowledge. In nearly every particular the story is without foundation. As an example of its inaccuracy, even in minor details, the drawing-room and library at C——, it seems, are one and the same room. Mr. H—— never saw, or spoke to a ghost.

It appears, however, that a nucleus of the story is to be found in the tradition that during the life of the present lord's grandfather, a priest, of the name of Fountain, was accosted by an appearance, in the old chapel at the top of the house at C——, and was requested to say mass for the soul of the deceased person.

The author may add, that, on mentioning the story to Lord ——, three years ago, his lordship replied that a strange thing happened to his father, which may also have contributed something to the tale. While looking over some old books, one day, he found a paper which appeared to be the general confession of a deceased ancestor, who had perished, the victim of political intrigues. He at once proceeded to burn it, and having to walk some way to find a fire, he was followed by footsteps all the way, till the fire was reached and the paper destroyed. Of this incident there can be no doubt.

It is easy to trace the process by which successive inaccuracies, and a little imagination, together with the universal tendency of all stories to gain rather than

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lose by repetition, had expanded the simple incident just mentioned, and perhaps combined it with Mr. Fountain's story, so as to make up an imposing array of circumstances, not one of which would stand a searching investigation.

Another story, also derived from the same amiable but inaccurate source, shared the fate of the preceding, but, like it, was also compensated for by the following well-attested incident.

Captain B——, while in the Austrian service, was quartered in some town (in Hungary, as the author's informant believes). His quarters consisted of a room opening into a small closet, which again had no outlet but through the room. Late one evening he was sitting alone at a table in the middle of his room, when the outer door of the room opened, and a woman entered, and walked straight into the closet at the opposite end of the room, and disappeared. He thought it strange, as there was certainly no means of exit by the closet. As she passed, he looked well at her, but did not know her.

Next morning he heard that a woman had died in the house that night, and at the time when he had noticed the strange visitor in his room. His curiosity was excited; he asked to see her corpse, and at once recognised the features of his visitor. Captain B—— is no visionary, but a man of the world, and a man of honour, whose veracity is unimpeachable. The author's informant has heard him relate this little story over and over again.

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MISSION STORIES.

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" Though in the paths of death I tread,
With gloomy horrors overspread,
My steadfast heart shall fear no ill,
For thou, O Lord, art with me still;
Thy friendly crook shall give me aid,
And guide me through the dreadful shade."

ADDISON.

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CHAPTER V.

MISSION STORIES.

ANY one who has conversed much with old missionaries, must have heard many stories of the præternatural, belonging chiefly to a period when missionaries were fewer than they are now in Britain. The author has thought it worth his while to collect a few of such stories as have come to his own knowledge. They tend to illustrate the watchful care of Providence over the administration of the sacraments, over the persons of the clergy, and in behalf of some of the erring, who were seeking the truth. Most of them are derived from original information, with not more than one intermediate hand between himself and the fountain.

Thus, the late Dr. Gillow, president of Ushaw College, related to a personal friend of the author, the two following incidents that happened to himself, while a missionary at York.

One night, while riding to a sick person, he observed what appeared to be a heap of gold sovereigns, lying close to a milestone. He reasoned with himself,—should he stop and secure them for his poor people; or might they not be an illusion to detain him from the sick person? If an illusion, he had better push on; and if not, he should equally well find them on his return. He therefore hastened on, and found the

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patient with hardly a moment of life to spare; a minute or two later, and Mr. Gillow would not have found him alive.

As he again passed by the milestone the gold sovereigns had entirely disappeared.

At another time, he was sent for in haste to see a man who was represented as being dangerously ill. When Dr. Gillow arrived, the sick man had just expired. The priest addressed the bystanders, and assured them that he had not lost a moment in obeying the call. They fell on their knees, and confessed with trembling that their companion was in perfect health when Dr. Gillow was sent for; that they had arranged a plot for decoying the priest to the house, with a view of robbing him; but that the judgments of God had overtaken them, and had thus awfully laid their accomplice low.*

Another gentleman, whose acquaintance the author has the honour of possessing, was told the following story, also by Dr. Gillow.

This gentleman happening to remark, in conversation, that miracles were now very unfrequent, Dr. Gillow replied, "You would hardly say so, if you could learn all the curious incidents that occur in the experience of almost every missionary. As an instance, here is one that happened to myself." He then related this singular anecdote of a dream.

A lady one day called on him, while he was a missionary at York, and begged him to show her all the rooms in his house. "Very well," he answered; "this is one of them." He then took her to the kitchen, and

* A very similar case is related by Abbé Carron, in 1794, as having happened to a French priest, in Paris.

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from the bottom of the house to the top. When he had shown her the last room, he expressed a hope that she was satisfied. "No," was her reply—"you have not yet shown me every room; I know you have another, which I have not seen." Dr. Gillow was puzzled; till he bethought him of the sacristy, into which he accordingly showed her. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "this is the room; there is the place where I knelt, and here you sat," pointing to the confessional; "last night I saw it all in a dream. Will you now sit down here and teach me your religion? for I must become a Catholic."

A missionary priest at B——, a very few years ago, promised to say mass for a woman in his congregation who had died. Among other engagements of the same kind, he unconsciously overlooked her claim upon him. By and by her husband came to him, and begged him to remember his promise. The missionary thought that he had already done so. "O no, sir," the man replied, "I can assure you that you haven't; my poor wife has been to me to tell me so, and to get you to do this great act of charity for her." The priest was satisfied of his omission, and immediately supplied it. Soon after, the poor man returned to thank him, at the woman's desire. She had told her husband that now she was perfectly happy in heaven; her face, which had appeared all distempered at her first visit, was surrounded with a halo of light, when she came again. This anecdote reached the author through a common friend of his own, and of the missionary's.

A similar anecdote is told of a nun, in the English convent at Bruges, between thirty and forty years ago.

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A relation of Canon Schmidt had died in the house; and Miss L——, another nun, much attached to her, saw her friend one night in a dream. She seemed to come with a serious countenance, and pointed to the office for the dead in an office-book, which she appeared to hold in her hand. Her friend was much perplexed, and consulted Miss N——, a third nun, who suggested that, perhaps, Miss L—— had not said the office three times, as usual, for her deceased sister. Miss L—— was nearly sure that she had; but as she had a habit of marking off this obligation as it was discharged, it could be easily ascertained. On examining her private note-book, it turned out that she had not said the three offices. Miss N——'s sister, who was educated in the same convent, told the author this little story, and afterwards was good enough to revise his narrative of it. So that this account is virtually her own; a remark which applies to very many of the stories in this collection. Though seeming to have passed through two channels on their way to this book, that is, through the author's memory and his friend's, yet when he has submitted to his friend a written memorandum of the narrative, and received and adopted his friend's corrections, the story is as authentic as if it had passed through only one intermediate channel. For there is no doubt that the value of a story diminishes rapidly with every additional hand through which it passes.

There are many examples on record of singular coincidences, to say the very least, by which the comfort of receiving the last sacraments of the church has been secured to the dying. Such a one as the following occurred in London, almost within the memory of

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persons still living. A priest, who was hastening through a very low part of the city, to attend a dying man who had long neglected his duties, and only at the last moment had called for the minister of God, stepped upon a board, which suddenly gave way underneath his feet. He was precipitated into a dark cellar, and for a moment or two confused by the fall. As he stumbled about in search of a way out, he heard a low moaning; and, guided by his ear, he presently came upon a poor woman, a Catholic, dying alone in that dismal den. He gave her all the assistance in his power, and prepared her for death. Having still a great work of charity before him, he left her, to see his other parishioner; but when he arrived at the house, the man was just dead. "Mercy and judgment" seems to be inscribed on such an incident.

At another time a priest, on his way to assist a dying person, in London, was beset in a dark alley by thieves, who overpowered him, and began to plunder him. He took the little pyx in both his hands, and held it high above his head, and called loudly for assistance. The thieves were busy in his pockets, and never paid any attention to what he had in his hands; and presently the appearance of people at a little distance alarmed them, and they fled. Although he made no doubt that they had effectually rifled his pockets, yet, on examining, he found that he had lost nothing. These stories were both of them related to the author, by a young gentleman, who had heard the old priests, whom they concerned, themselves repeat the wonderful particulars. The admirers of Mr. Digby's writings will remember that he alludes to the first, in one of his earlier works.

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The following anecdote is derived from Lancashire, through the medium of a gentleman, a native of that county, who communicated it to the author ten years ago, as current there when that gentleman was young.

Mr. Boardley was a priest in Lancashire, many, many years ago; he died before the end of last century. He was a laborious missionary, and highly regarded for his piety, although his manners were somewhat eccentric. One night he was roused from sleep by a loud knocking at his house-door; he rose, and opened the window of his bed-room, to inquire what was the matter. It was a man come with two horses, to fetch him to a sick person at a distance. He at once prepared for a ride, and started; his guide riding on before. They rode on rapidly, and by and by the face of the country became less familiar to the priest, and the roads grew perplexing. At last they entered a wood, and soon drew up at the door of a rude barn, in a lonely spot; the guide showed the priest in, and begged him to lose no time in discharging his office, as it might be dangerous to remain long.

Mr. Boardley entered, and found a man lying in a corner of the barn, dangerously wounded, and hardly able to speak. The priest, however, succeeded in rousing him, heard his confession, gave him all that he had to give him, and was then hurried away by the guide, in the same way as they had come. Before morning broke, the priest was again at home, fatigued with his long ride. He found a comfortable breakfast waiting for him, as he supposed, through the forethought of his housekeeper. He slept for some hours, and on going down-stairs in the morning, he thanked her for her thoughtfulness in preparing some refreshment for him,

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after his long hard night's ride. He then discovered that she was not even aware of his having been out.

The mystery seemed inexplicable, and it was no nearer solution, when Mr. Boardley read in the newspapers, some time after, of a robbery and a murder committed in a distant part of the county. The description of the spot, and of the man, who had been left in a lonely barn to die, agreed exactly with all the particulars of his midnight ride. That barn was fifty miles from the priest's door. To his dying day, Mr. Boardley believed that Providence had wonderfully interfered, that night, to secure for the poor wounded man the spiritual assistance necessary in his last hour.

Another anecdote of Mr. Boardley, though not pertaining to the præternatural, may not be out of place here, as illustrating the character of the man. The author is indebted for it to another Lancashire gentleman. It seems that Mr. Boardley was in the habit of preaching to his simple country congregation at Hefton, in broad Lancashire, before, or during mass. Some wild young men from Liverpool, one Sunday, appeared in his little chapel, to enjoy the sport of hearing a sermon in the broad dialect of the peasants. Mr. Boardley had heard of their coming, and that day there was no sermon, till the end of the mass. He then begged the congregation to excuse him for a few moments, while he took some refreshment; after which he would return and preach to them. He did; but instead of saying a few simple things to his people, as usual, he preached in English, a sermon of extraordinary power, addressed to the young men who had come to amuse themselves. He exposed to them the evil nature of

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their course of life; he described them to themselves, so accurately, that, as one of them afterwards observed, he could not have done it better if he had known them personally. They were surprised and confounded; they even doubted whether it could be Mr. Boardley himself, the common preacher in broad Lancashire. He effectually cured them, if not of their folly, at least of their wish to visit his little chapel on such an errand.

The late Mr. William Reid, a Scottish missionary, during his residence at Stobhall in Perthshire, was called one night to attend a sick member of his flock. It was a wild night in winter; the snow was driven in his face by a high wind. He began his journey as bravely as he could; but, as he went on, it seemed that the increasing violence of the storm was likely to baffle all his efforts, and force him to return. Just as he was giving up the struggle, a large cart loaded with hay appeared before him; and under its shelter he managed to hold on for some time longer. By and by it suddenly disappeared, he could not say how; and he was then in a worse plight than ever. A moment afterwards he perceived a light by the roadside, issuing from a cottage, which he entered. He found there a dying Catholic in need of his assistance; not the person whom he was on his way to visit. The authority for this story is another Scottish missionary; but whether he derived it immediately from Mr. Reid himself, the author is at present unable to say. In substance the story is sufficiently well authenticated to entitle it to be received with little hesitation.

The author is indebted for the two following stories

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to the same indefatigable collector as he has to thank for the last.

When the late Archbishop Curtis was a parish priest in Ireland, a member of his congregation, who, though often warned of the consequences likely to follow his careless life, had passed many years in the habitual neglect of his religious duties, was seized with mortal illness, and sent in haste for the priest. The messenger, on arriving at Mr. Curtis's house, saw him, as he thought, standing at an open window over the entrance door: he declared the purpose of his errand; Mr. Curtis then closed the window and retired. No one went to the sick man, however, who died shortly after without any spiritual assistance. Next day, when Mr. Curtis was asked about it, he solemnly assured the inquirer that he then for the first time heard of the man's illness: the messenger had not told his errand to him the day before.

During the Irish rebellion in '98, when the island was under martial law, and no one could safely be seen out of doors after a certain hour at night, Mr. Curtis had one evening delayed returning home from a distant visit till after the forbidden hour. His friends tried in vain to dissuade him from attempting to go home that night; he was determined to try it at all hazards, and he set out. The patrol soon perceived him, and gave him chase. He put his horse to its full speed and pushed on, they riding hard behind him. As he flew along the road, he distinctly heard a voice exclaiming, "Ride for your life." By and by the patrol gave up the chase. When Mr. Curtis heard them dropping behind, he slackened his pace, and turned aside

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from the high road into bypaths that were familiar to him. At length he approached a house where all the inmates were apparently looking for his arrival. Knowing them well, he called out to them to conceal his horse, and that he would take shelter with them for the night. He was presently told that they had sent for him to see one of their number who was dangerously ill; the whole household had been anxiously expecting his arrival. Not having been at home for many hours, he had missed the messenger, and knew nothing of the exigencies of the family to whose door he had thus providentially been conducted.

The following narrative of the triumph of grace may close this section of these inquiries. Though not strictly belonging to what the author has defined as the præternatural, it attests no less forcibly the finger of God. It was taken down from the lips of the Jesuit father to whom the incident occurred.

When the Jesuits preach a mission in the towns of Sicily, it is their custom to perambulate the streets at night, preceded by a few boys carrying a cross and singing some simple words, such as

> Torna, torna, O peccatore;
> Chè ti chiama il tuo signore!*

Then they stop in some square, or open place, and one of the fathers addresses a few words to the bystanders.

Some years ago there lived in the town of Castel Vetrano, in Sicily, a young girl, whose evil life was a public scandal. She had been taken away from her

* Return, O sinful soul, return;
Nor thy Creator's goodness spurn.

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native place, when little more than a child, by a gentleman, with whom she lived for a few years; and when he grew tired of her and ill-treated her, she left him, and entered on a course of open vice. When Father F—— began a mission in Vetrano, she, almost alone, in her beauty and her pride, defied the efforts of the missionary, and even the remonstrances of the magistrates. Others gave way, and renounced their evil life; she vowed that this little father should make no impression on her.

One night, while she was in sin, the little procession passed through the street in which she lived. Father F—— was aware of her story, but did not know that she resided in that particular street. "Torna, torna, O peccatore," struck like an arrow to her poor heart; she sprang out of bed, exclaiming, "I will return! I will return!" She ran down into the street, threw herself at the feet of the missionary, and prayed to be admitted to penance. She made a confession with sentiments of the deepest humility and contrition, and begged earnestly to be permitted to make some public reparation for the scandal of her former life. The missionary encouraged the idea, but recommended prudence.

At the close of the mission a cross was to be erected, as usual, in the town, as a memorial of the mission; and the magistrates were, one day, assembled with the missionaries, to fix upon a site for the cross. While they were discussing this point together, the poor young girl appeared among them, to the surprise and indignation of those who did not know of her conversion. She addressed the chief magistrate, presented the licence for her former sinful profession, and then

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tore it up on the spot; and, pulling off her bonnet, she with her own hands cut off her long, beautiful hair, and scattered it to the winds. "Viva la misericordia di Dio!" (Long live the mercy of God!) exclaimed Father F——; and mounting on a stone, he preached penance to the bystanders. At that instant the grace of God touched the heart of a wicked young man, who had been for upwards of twenty years a reprobate, leading a life of complicated iniquity. His was the most wonderful conversion that ever came under the notice of Father F——.

The young girl was removed to a house of protection at Trapani, where she soon after received an offer of marriage from a young nobleman of high family. She declined it, however, preferring to dedicate her life, in that house, to the care of penitents like herself. To this good work she still dedicates the fine abilities and accomplishments that distinguish her.

Viva la misericordia di Dio!

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CHAPTER VI.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THIS chapter will be devoted to a few stories of a miscellaneous character, differing widely in their nature, but all agreeing in their attestation of something more than appears on the surface of natural effects.

Although the following anecdote of self-seeing, or of double appearance, occurs in Mr. Neale's "Unseen World," the author gives it here, because he obtained it from an independent source, and the authority of his informant was derived through one intermediate hand from the gentleman to whom the story relates.

A lawyer in London was one night going home to his chambers in Gray's Inn; and, as he walked along, he perceived a figure, the exact reduplication of himself, on the opposite side of the street. When he stopped, it stopped; when he quickened his pace, the figure did the same; and it walked slowly when he did so. Feeling it very unpleasant, he turned aside into a darker street, but the figure was there also; and when he reached his chambers and opened the door with his latch-key, the figure stood behind him, and walked in with him, passing through his sitting-room,

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into his bed-room. The company of his second self was so intolerable, that the gentleman locked up his chambers, and went to the house of a friend, where he spent the night. The next morning, the woman who usually called him was unable to get into his chambers; she forced the door; and on going into his bed-room, she found that a large beam, directly over his bed, had fallen in the night; and but for his absence he must have been killed.

The much-vexed question of Second Sight would require a voluminous treatment to do it justice; and the author hopes, in another work, to dedicate a little space to it; yet he is unwilling here to pass it over without any notice. Many of the stories current in the Scottish Highlands in connexion with Second Sight are fictitious, or at least highly coloured; but there seems to be an under-stratum of truth in some of them, which has to be accounted for. Whether such stories are to be regarded as indications of a Providential suggestion of the future, or whether, according to some great authorities, they must be considered as produced by the agency of the Evil One, there are a few well-attested examples, which it seems impossible to question, however they are to be explained.

January, 1856, will long be remembered at Dingwall, in the North of Scotland, for the sudden death of two priests and a lay gentleman, who were accidentally poisoned at dinner, in the house of a friend, in consequence of aconite having been used in cooking instead of horse-radish. That morning, an old woman at Eskadale was heard crooning to herself in a low tone

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"I see a hearse coming over Beauley Bridge; I see another, and I see a third!" The neighbours made light of it, but she persisted. The three bodies were conveyed across Beauley Bridge to Eskadale, where the funeral rites were performed. On the morning of the fatal day, two or three gentlemen, standing and talking together in the open air, at Beauley, suddenly heard an unearthly scream in the air; it at once occurred to them that some fatal news would soon reach them.

A highly intelligent friend has furnished the author with the following excellent example of Second Sight. In the summer of 1843, some Highland farmers had occasion to pass the ferry across Loch Nevis in Inverness-shire, on their way to market. After being rowed across, they went into a small *bothy*, or public-house, to refresh themselves before continuing their journey. They were shown into a little room above stairs, scantily furnished with a few chairs, a table, and a rude kind of couch. One of the party went up to the couch, and was going to sit down upon it, when another of them, who had the gift of *seeing*, cried out, "Take care, don't sit down there; don't you see there's a corpse upon it?" The other, who knew the faculty of the speaker, answered with surprise, "No, I see nothing; but whose corpse is it?" "It is one of the boatmen who has just rowed us across."

Well; they went on to market; and, next day, on their way back, they stopped again at the little inn, before crossing the ferry. They went, as usual, upstairs, into the parlour; and there they found, lying upon the rude couch, the wet body of one of the

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boatmen who had rowed them across the day before, and who had been drowned that morning. The author received this account, in 1845, from a Highland gentleman, who learnt it from one of the men concerned. It must be added to the accumulation of examples awaiting either the solution of further knowledge, or the disproval of a more searching scrutiny.

The author does not hesitate to confess that, to him, the following story of a Charm-ring is totally inexplicable. Were it not attested by evidence of an unimpeachable kind, he would not have given it a place here.

A young lady in Cornwall had been applied to, to procure a charm-ring* for a friend, who was making a collection of curiosities. A young man, son of a blacksmith in the same town of L——, had worn one for many years on the third finger of his left hand. Miss H—— therefore sent her servant to him, to request him to dispose of it, which he did.

The reason of his wearing this ring was the following. When quite a boy, he had been afflicted with an extraordinary sort of nightmare, or sleep-walking. Almost every night, after the first hour or two of sleep, he would get up, awake a younger brother who slept in the same room with him, and, with threats of severe punishment, make him do whatever he was bid. The boy's violence was such, that he was always obeyed; night after night, he kept the whole family in the

* For a description of Charm-rings, see BRANDE'S *Popular Antiquities.*

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greatest alarm. Some of the things he required his brother to do were merely of an absurd and inconvenient sort; but at other times he would keep him out of bed, and deprive him of rest till the approach of morning. Sometimes he would make his brother bring up food and drink from the kitchen, and he would devour it voraciously. Everything that he did was accompanied with cries and shrieks of so alarming a kind as to rouse the neighbours in the same street. There was no doubt that he was unconscious of what he was doing at those times; it was a kind of sleep-walking; and when day returned he knew nothing of what had happened, and could hardly believe the accounts he received of his violence during the night. Medical skill could do nothing for him; he was becoming the torment of the house and the terror of the neighbourhood; and as he was a good lad, well disposed, and industrious, and extremely attached to his brother, he became much depressed by this affliction. Everything else having failed, he therefore tried a charm-ring.

A charm-ring, according to the superstition of Cornwall, is made in one of two ways. Either the ring must be made of silver which an unmarried woman has given to an unmarried man, or the afflicted person must stand at the church-door and beg silver, to make the ring, from unmarried women as they come out of church. So the boy got his charm-ring, and wore it ever after; and from that time was perfectly well.

All this happened about 1840; ten years afterwards, he was asked to part with the ring, and as he made no doubt he was cured, he readily gave it

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up, and it became the property of the collector of curiosities.

In about a week, it became known that the nightly torment of his boyhood had returned to the young man. He was in such a state that his father told Miss H——'s servant there was no living at home for John's violence, that his shrieks were heard up and down the street, and that his condition was, so far, worse than it had been years before, as it was the agony of a man and no longer of a boy. He begged, therefore, that the ring might be returned to him. Miss H—— could not recover it; but she offered silver to make another. It was accepted; the ring was made and worn, and the young man has been well ever since. The author's informant, a sister of Miss H——, saw him in 1850, working at his father's forge, and wearing the silver ring. He was perfectly well, and he bore a good character in the town. This lady adds, that many similar stories might be told; but this one recommends itself on this account, that all the persons concerned, as well as all the incidents, are perfectly well known to her.

The great Humboldt remarks, that it is unreasonable to reject the evidence of a well-attested fact merely on account of the rarity of the fact. Subsequent increase of knowledge may develop the cause of its occurrence. Thus, it is now well known that the fable of Memnon's statue singing at sunrise has been realized by natural causes in Arabia and in South America. Currents of air, set in motion by the sun's rays, communicate vibration to thin laminæ, or plates of mica, in certain rocks, thereby causing a musical sound.

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In a similar manner, the researches of Reichenbach in what he calls the Od fluid, and in the ability of patients labouring under certain nervous diseases to perceive it, have thrown some light on stories of corpse-candles. We know of some gases which ignite on coming in contact with the atmosphere; we also know that a churchyard is a laboratory of gases, arising from animal decomposition. The bubble of gaseous fluid rises, and ignites; as the wind directs it, it perhaps ignites in its passage other gaseous bubbles, not like itself spontaneously inflammable, but capable of ignition on the approach of flame; a little imagination only is wanting to complete the stories of corpse-lights haunting churchyards, and indicating the path of future funerals. It has been observed also that the loud barking of dogs, and even the appearance of strange dogs, and of birds that feed on carrion, about the house, have frequently preceded a death in it. It is within the limits of natural causes that effluvia of some highly subtle kind, resulting from incipient dissolution, may excite the perception of the lower animals, even before their presence can be manifested to the organs of human sense. The scent of dogs we know to be a much finer and more subtle faculty than any material endowment in the possession of man. Among all such facts, however, the only clue for a philosopher is *Evidence;* not of one case, or of a few cases, but of the consilience of many cases. Once a fact is established by such evidence, the next step in the operation is to account for it on natural principles. Even a superficial observation of nature must convince any liberal mind that the limits of the natural and of the præternatural order are by no means easily or strictly defined; they often

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intersect, and die into each other; so that a philosopher must be as slow to reason on the relations of cause and effect, as he is rigid in examining and scrutinising the evidence on which his reasoning is based.

On September 12th, 1857, the *Central America* steamboat was lost in a gale off Cape Hatteras. A survivor, who had been buffeting the waves for several hours, says, that in a momentary lull of the tempest, he distinctly heard his mother's voice, saying, "Johnny, did you eat sister's grapes?" The words related to an incident, of which he assures us he had not thought for twenty years at least. When he was a boy of eleven, or so, a sister of his was dying of consumption, and a neighbour sent her some hothouse grapes. The boyish instinct of plunder could not resist the temptation of finding these grapes; he devoured them all. After he had got into bed, his mother came to him, and asked him, "Johnny, did you eat sister's grapes?" He confessed it, and escaped punishment. This little incident happened thirty years before the wreck of the *Central America;* and for perhaps ten years after it happened the thought of it gave him an occasional pang of regret. But for twenty years it seemed quite to have escaped his memory, till the very sound of his mother's question appeared to return to him in that prolonged struggle between life and death. He had never heard his mother's voice more distinctly. It did not terrify him, but he thought it a presage of his death. He, however, survived to give a written description of the wreck, and of this incident, in clear and forcible language.

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This little story is very similar to the experience of more than one person, after so long an immersion in water as to have lost all consciousness. They thought that, as in a momentary flash, all the events, the words, the actions of their whole life passed before their recollection; things long since forgotten, words transient and unsubstantial as the air that helped to sound them; everything said and done by them, and to them, and in their presence, darted through their memory like a gleam of lightning. It has been suggested that the mind may resemble a palimpsest manuscript, or a photographic plate. Every line, every impression once made, is indelible. Successive impressions may appear to cover, but they cannot efface what has preceded them. All remains, to deliver up the record entrusted to it, when the final judgment perhaps shall have come, to make that publicly known to mankind which has been all along secretly known to God; which was once known, and then in great part forgotten, by the mind itself; but which now flashes back on the memory with an irresistible appeal.

In taking leave of his readers, the author wishes to disclaim any idea of having exhausted the subject. He would rather represent himself as having merely opened it. It is one of absorbing interest, and of growing importance; it is one in which every intelligent and careful observer of daily occurrences may contribute something towards illuminating a profound obscurity. Without credulity, yet accessible to facts when sufficiently vouched, any one who chooses may accumulate a valuable amount of independent experience in this

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dark subject. Let intelligent persons only try; and if they will discriminate, and report with ordinary truthfulness, a few years will add immensely to the collection of facts on which alone any sound theory of such exceptions to the course of nature can ever be constructed.

THE END.

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